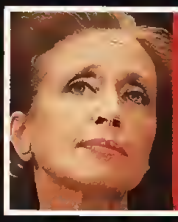
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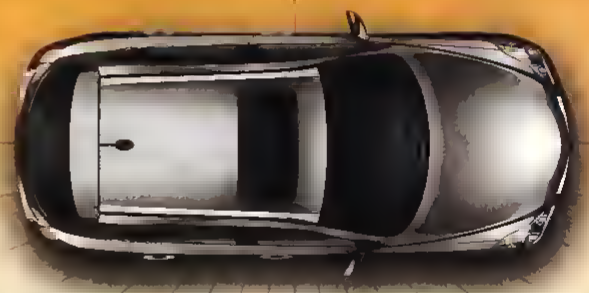
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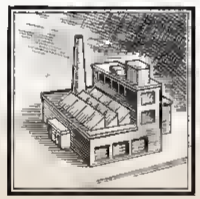
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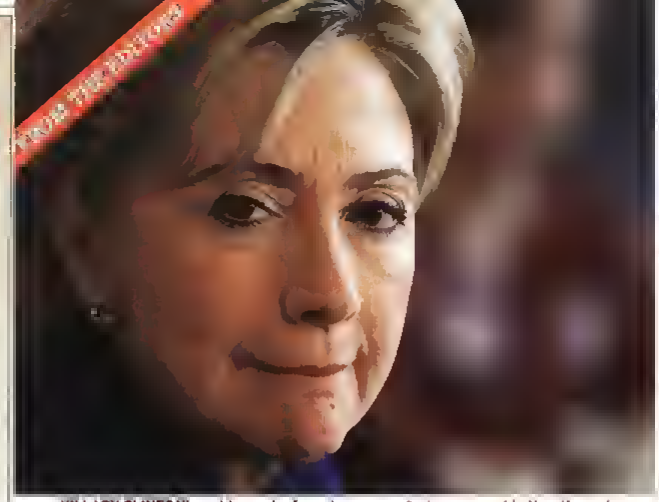


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BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS

HILLARY CLINTON's sudden rush of emotion came at a key moment in New Hampshire

The crying game

A few weeks ago Hillary Clinton was asked by a host on MSNBC if she ever cried. "When I have to get up at 4 a.m. in Des Moines, I tear up," she replied. It was a quip meant to deflate her image as the ice queen of U.S. politics. But with results from Des Moines, and the rest of the Iowa caucuses—as well as the New Hampshire primary—showing her in a pitched battle with Barack Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination, the time for quips is over.

So prior to the New Hampshire vote this week she was asked by a member of a coffee shop audience how she "got out the door every day." This time her eyes welled up and her voice quavered as she described the burden of campaigning and her hopes for America in a way that made her sound like just another mother trying to whip up breakfast, get the kids off to school and make it to work in time to save the country. She didn't actually cry, but she got close enough that her red rimmed eyes stole the news for the day.

She may not be much of a trendsetter, but Clinton seems to be on to something with the wet eye look. Republican candidate Mitt Romney has already watered up at least twice this campaign. And Obama apparently felt the need to supply his own emotional moment to blunt the media's sudden sympathy for Clinton. He promptly claimed his dead mother would have cried if she'd heard of his victory in Iowa. The tear gap can no longer be ignored.

Something is going on in U.S. politics. Several generations ago the mere suggestion of tears was enough to doom a campaign. Edmund Muskie went to his grave claiming it was just a snowflake on his cheek in 1972. Regardless, his run for the presidency was over. And when former Democratic congresswoman Pat Schroeder couldn't form coherent sentences while mopping her eyes announcing she would not run for president in 1987, it was held as further proof of how unfit she was for the job. These days President George W. Bush regularly wells up during memorial services. Political crying has gone from anathema to acceptable to mandatory.

Thankfully, Canadian politics is running behind in the waterworks department. Jean Chretien's autobiography describes how he "choked up" in the week before the 1995 referendum discussing the possibility that the federalists could lose. But that was behind the closed doors of caucus. Brian Mulroney's recent appearance at the House of Commons produced a wide range of emotions—from contrition to anger and back—but no tears. Among our current political leaders, nebbish policy wonks Stephen Harper and Stephane Dion seem as likely to shed a tear as they are to burst into song.

There's nothing wrong with politicians showing emotion. They're human beings after all. But if crying on demand has become the latest political calculation for attention, you can count us as dry eyed cynics. As Shakespeare's Lear said, "We cry that we are come to this great stage of fools." M

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'Amiel made a noble attempt to quantify that entity sitting in the corner of her life'

THE HOME STRETCH

YOUR ARTICLE on the real estate boom in areas like Calgary, Toronto and Vancouver did not touch on the positive effect big city high prices are having on smaller areas ("Is it a bubble? Is it about to burst?" Business, Dec 31). In towns such as Terrace Bay, Schreiber, Nipigon and Red Rock in northwestern Ontario, for example, retirees with fixed incomes or with small businesses and the ability to operate anywhere, are arriving in significant numbers to take advantage of low housing costs and a good quality of life. They are able to sell their $500,000 houses in big cities and purchase similar homes for $100,000-$200,000. They then live off the difference and are still able to travel. Who says you can't use your house to finance your retirement?

Sean Irwin, Terrace Bay, Ont

YOUR STORY PAINTS an overly optimistic picture of the challenges faced by Canadians in purchasing homes, partly because it ignores the way in which Canadian tax laws stack the deck. In the U.S., mortgage interest is tax deductible, while in many countries, personal tax rates are much lower. This should be taken into account in affordability comparisons based on gross personal income. Under Canadian law, it is speculators who are given the advantage. Investment loans used to buy real estate, other than principal residences, are fully deductible. But Revenue Canada's rules that prohibit taking ongoing tax losses on rental properties, as well as those that might tax speculative gains as business income rather than capital gains, are only loosely enforced. As a result, in markets like Vancouver that are largely driven by speculation, housing prices reach levels that are simply not attainable for average Canadians.

Gary McCaig, Port Alberni, B.C.

I don't believe it's the little details like a sexy bathroom vanity that sell condos, but vanity itself ("A 'hip' lifestyle of one's own," Business, Dec. 31). An appeal to one's vanity is rarely in vain. All vendors know this.

John Gatsis, Toronto

NOT-SO-GOOD FENCES

FOR MORE THAN 60 years as a tourist and a visitor, I have been going back and forth between Canada and the U.S., and the thickening of the border can certainly be an inconvenience at times ("Why Santa Claus can't get into the U.S.," From the Editors, Dec. 31). I carry my passport and try to get lucky with the times and locations of my crossings. And I never forget that this is the U.S. government's doing, not the will of most individual Americans. And on a greater scale, it's sad to see such good neighbours riven by security measures that may well turn out to be excessive and ineffective. Sometimes I think the U.S. administration misses the point when we suffer economic and social disruption, surely the terrorists are winning.

Paul Le Fort, Orleans, Ont.



ELEPHANTINE HUMOUR

CONGRATULATIONS to Barbara Amiel for her noble attempt to quantify the previously immeasurable entity sitting in the corner of her life ("That big thing I won't be talking about," Opinion, Dec. 31). Her ability to capture both the magnitude of her husband's ego and their disdain for we common people is truly inspiring. The impact of her plea for understanding is exceeded only by the musings of her (and Conrad's) shill, Mark Steyn.

Mark Sefton, Brandon, Man.

I DON'T KNOW when I have enjoyed a column more. I giggled again and again and I found Amiel's piece elegant and elevating.

Dick Jones, Tillsonburg, Ont.

RIGHT-HAND MAN

IT WAS MOST SURPRISING to read the terrible attack on Christian conservative Craig Chandler, the man who will be running as an independent in the provincial riding of Calgary-Egmont ("Preaching the spirit of the West," National, Dec. 31). Yes, Chandler is against same-sex marriage, as are many others including me. It is an immoral union that degrades the true meaning of the God-ordained marriage tradition. Chandler is not on the fringe by any means and his nomination proves that. People like him will soon make Alberta great. If your bureau chief Nicholas Kohler doesn't like it, he can kindly leave Alberta and go back to Toronto, the capital of the liberal left. We won't miss him by any means.

Merle Terlesky, Calgary

CRAIG CHANDLER MUST be from Backwards, Alta. Hasn't he heard? The same-sex marriage debate is over. It's the law of the land that gays and lesbians can marry and promise to care for their partners even as hetero sexual people do. Some church people are still gagging on single verses that are recorded in a book they may or may not have read in its entirety. Some cling to Leviticus 20:13 ("If a man also he with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death"), not realizing that this also requires them to participate in the stoning of those individuals. Others talk about "one man, one woman" (loosely based on Genesis 2:24), also forgetting that Solomon, a man said to be very wise, had 700 wives and 300 concubines.

Russell A. Plumley, St. Catharines, Ont.

LATIMER AND THE LAW

ANDREW COYNE'S ARTICLE about Robert Latimer ("Justice means having to say you're sorry," Opinion, Dec. 31) should help people who have had a difficult time accepting the National Parole Board's decision to reject Latimer's application for parole. He lays out clearly that Latimer taking the life of his daughter is wrong. No one has the right to take the life of another. However, all of us have the right, as well as the duty, to avail ourselves of the assistance that is available when life hands us a difficult burden.

Louise Burns, Saskatoon

Being admirers of Andrew Coyne we were all the more distressed to read his opinion piece on Robert Latimer. The only duty of the parole board toward Latimer was to grant him day parole if it felt assured he would not reoffend. The justice system knew Latimer would not reoffend the day it put him in jail. Euthanasia is a decision of the heart and mind and no amount of exegetical gymnastics and



WHETHER LATIMER IS SORRY OR NOT, SAYS A READER, "I AM CONFIDENT I DON'T NEED TO FEAR HIM"

law will persuade someone to refrain from fulfilling this act if he is convinced it is the only option. We feel that Coyne's impressive intellect and essential humanity failed him when he wrote this piece.

Peggy Nixon Gualtieri, Ottawa

THE LATIMER FAMILY'S lifelong suffering caused by their daughter's condition and demise should be enough without our imposing even more. I look forward to a future when compassion-inspired euthanasia is removed from the domain of vengeful jurisprudence.

J.M. Weber, Sherbrooke, Que.

IT SEEMS that almost daily in this country, those accused or convicted of horrendous, random crimes are free to walk the streets at the risk of you and I. Whether Latimer is sorry or not has no bearing on the fact that I am 100 per cent confident that I do not need to fear him. I wish I could say as much for the repeat offenders who shate my sidewalk.

Shawna Brataschuk, Edmonton

ANDREW COYNE MUST have a golden life. What does he know about chronic, hopeless pain? I can tell him that mercy killing goes on all across this country, quietly, every day. And Coyne must be a great political spin-artist to twist the realities of the Latimer case so out of shape. How can he compare a devastated father/caregiver to Conrad Black, a man who used public funds to support an outrageous lifestyle? Furthermore, if Coyne has any knowledge of the prison system, which I doubt, he would know that all convicted felons learn that it is mandatory to mouth regrets at a parole hearing.

Gloria Thompson, Wasaga Beach, Ont

COYNE'S JUDGMENT of Robert Latimer's case shows his exaggerated self-esteem. A fair judge would take into consideration Latimer's state of mind, the effect of his prolonged imprisonment on his family and, of course, his love for his daughter.

Werner Wuigk, Fort Langley, B.C.

AS KILLING a person is against the law, I am sure that Robert Lanmer would admit that killing his daughter was a crime. For him, killing his daughter did her great service by stopping her pain. For that he will not feel remorse. Under his particular circumstances, he has paid his debt to society more than adequately and should be released.

Judith Simpson, Willowdale, Ont

PLEASE HAVE Andrew Coyne get a new photograph. I've seen better pictures on "wanted" posters.

Ted Macdonald, Belleville, Ont.

BACKING OFF BLACK

I PUT OFF reading the most recent *Maclean's* because I knew it would be infuriating. Finally finishing the issue today, I can't help but roll my eyes at the almost comically one-sided coverage of the Conrad Black trial ("Good bye to Chicago," Justice, Dec. 31). I'm so glad the trial is over. Perhaps now I can stop seeing Black apologists in the magazine and across your website. It's a truly bizarre thing that Black has received more compassion and good coverage than has Robert Latimer or any other of the real Canadians hurt by a flawed system. Now, can we move on?

Brenna Clarke Gray, Fredericton

WHILE I APPRECIATE the effort to set the record straight, theft is theft. Is Mark Steyn suggesting that it's okay for departing CEOs to pilfer half a per cent of annual sales just because they think they deserve it? Still, it's sobering to think that had Conrad Black not been so universally loathed, he might actually have succeeded in getting away with it.

John Tonus, North York, Ont

SIMPLY UN-BEARABLE

MACLEAN'S MAY BE Canada's best and most readable newsmagazine. Congratulations. But why would you do a story on a trigger-happy five-year old and his deranged grandfather who glory in shooting a 200 kg bear ("Ire Merritt. Like a chip off the old Crockett," Newsmakers, Dec. 31)? Next time you do that kind of story, please insert a compost bag.

Helmut Mayer, Meaford, Ont.

FEWER PEOPLE, PERIOD

THE IDEA of a baby tax as proposed by the *Medical Journal of Australia* is far from preposterous ("The heat is on," Bad news, Dec. 31). Your editors should take off the blinders and assess the ongoing global catastrophe for what it really is—consumption by too many people. Short of reducing population, there is probably no answer to problems like climate change because tiny incremental increases in efficiency are overbalanced by steady increases in population.

Harold Welch, Clandeboye, Man.

TAXING HEALTH CARE

IN JOHN GEDDES's article on health care ("Waiting for a revolution," National, Dec. 31) there is no mention of an idea that might make a significant contribution to controlling health care costs in this country. It is to make health care a taxable benefit. The first step, of course, would be to send each of us a statement at the end of each year telling us how much we cost the system during the year. Next, we should be instructed to include the amount in our taxable income. Low income people would be taxed on a small portion and high income folks would pay tax on a higher percentage. There would be many benefits from such a scheme. First, we would know how much we each cost the system, leading us to think about the necessary treatment for our ills. For example, if I had a cold, I could consider the implications of going to the emergency ward at the hospital, a walk-

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And on to the next state

WEB EXTRA. Washington correspondent Luiza Ch. Savage looks ahead to South Carolina and the other primaries

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"Wow. When was Justin Trudeau anointed Liberal leader in Canada? I totally missed that news conference"
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BLOG CENTRAL



Andrew Coyne
Our new national editor has a contrarian take on politics and policy
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Scott Feschuk
Taking questions on—and skewering—all things pop culture and politics
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Jaime J. Weinman
Needed now more than ever, our TV critic keeps you updated on the strike—and what is still worth watching
macleans.ca/weinman

TOP STORIES THIS WEEK

Macleans.ca Interview: Tom Green
He's doing a talk show from his living room, with guests like Pamela Anderson and Val Kilmer. Is the original "Jackass" back, or will this be as short-lived as his recently attempted hip-hop career?

This film festival costs $1
Maclean's photographer Jeff Harris documents the Havana Film Festival, with its charming old cinemas and one A-list star, Gael Garcia Bernal.

The sex offender registry—and your province
Michael Friscolanti follows up his investigation into this "national embarrassment" with a regional breakdown of the problems

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MAIL BAG

'Canada sure has an interesting way of achieving capital punishment for petty criminals: let someone else do it and pretend you are horrified'



JASON REED/REUTERS

THREE PICS OF BUSH (here with a Senegalese visitor) are three too many, a reader says

in clinic, my family doctor or home to a bowl of chicken soup. Second, unlike a two-tier system, it would allow discrimination on the basis of income. Third, it could garner more money for health care than our current tax regime. Lastly, people who have chronic illnesses requiring long-term care with expensive drugs could have some or all of the costs covered through tax rebates.
Andrew Grindlay, Westbank, B.C.

WORTH 1,000 WORDS

LET ME GET this straight. You choose scores of photos from the billions of newsworthy people on the planet and you pick three shots of George W. Bush, one of Britney Spears's butt and yet another of Robin Williams attempting to grope Halle Berry ("The year in pictures," Dec. 31). Some compelling.
Don Crewe, Port aux Basques, Nfld.

A CERTAIN DEATH?

I AM WRITING about your story on the demise of former refugee Hussein "L.J." Jilaow, who was deported to his homeland of Somalia after the Canada Border Services Agency overruled a decision by a federal judge to let him stay, and then was murdered (The End, Dec. 31). Canada sure has an interesting way of achieving capital punishment for petty criminals: let someone else do it, and then pretend you are horrified.
Anne van Arragon Hutten, Lakeville, N.S.

WHAT A WASTE of space. Are we to feel sorry for someone who was given a chance to live in a country with a great educational system and plenty of business opportunities? All he had to do was to learn the English language, go to school and decide what business opportunities he would like to pursue. Instead, he chose to quit school and become a criminal. Many immigrants have been successful in this country by putting in an effort. He, on the other hand, probably expected that the streets were lined with gold. Was his killing in Somalia because of his clan status or was it because he was doing the same criminal activities there that he did here?
Platon Werbicky, Calgary

IN PASSING

Milt Dunnell, 102, sports writer. His 52-year career spanned much of modern pro sports history, from the retirement of Joe DiMaggio to the Mike Tyson-Michael Spinks boxing match in 1988. In 1970, he retired from running the sports desk at his home paper, the *Toronto Star*, but continued to write regular columns until 1994. He was honoured in 1997 with the Liebling Award for boxing writing.

Gerald Le Dain, 83, Supreme Court justice. As dean of Toronto's Osgoode Hall Law School, he headed a federal inquiry into non-medical drug use that in 1972 called for decriminalizing marijuana possession. He served on the highest court from 1984 to 1988.

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A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF BILL GATES

The buttoned-down billionaire kicked off his farewell tour at the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this week. Gates offered his thoughts on the future of technology (touch and voice commands could become the norm in the next "digital decade") and on his own life. With help from Bono and Barack Obama, Gates joked about getting into music or politics after leaving Microsoft's corner office in July. His real plan is to focus more on his charitable foundation.

Good news

Less hot air

The Conservative government may have rejected the idea of a carbon tax this week, but the feds are finally putting form to the good intentions Environment Minister John Baird voiced after a recent summit in Bali. Their plan to put a price on greenhouse gas emissions makes more sense than an across-the-board tax because it targets emitters rather than consumers. This is the same model now up and running in Alberta where, as of July 1, the largest emitters must pay $15 for every tonne of emissions above targets. It may not please everyone, but after all the talk about global warming, it's nice to see some action.

Forever young

Older really does mean wiser. A new study out of Denmark reveals that the human brain actually sharpens with age—rather than diminishing. After tracking more than 4,000 people over a 20-year span, researchers found that math skills remain relatively constant, while verbal and writing abilities improve dramatically with each passing birthday. Now, if only scientists could explain why some senior citizens seem so determined to relive their youth. In California, a 74-year-old great grandmother was busted for running a marijuana grow-op recently. And in Ontario, police on the lookout for street racers pulled over an 85-year-old man driving his beloved Oldsmobile 161 km/h.

Gold never gets old

They missed Christmas, they missed New Year's, some missed school, well, not so much—all for a shot at the World Junior Hockey Championship in the Czech Republic. For Canadian viewers, the series was a holiday diversion that featured some great hockey; for these teens, the pressure and expectations were huge. Watch their overtime win—Canada's fourth straight—and the relief and jubilation afterwards, and you'll appreciate why even the most jaded NHLers treasure such victories among their fondest memories. Listen to their off-key rendition of the national anthem and hear the sound of a dream fulfilled. The future of the game is in good hands.

Bad news

Vigilant-e

In the past week, the social networking site Facebook has violated publication bans that would have resulted in criminal contempt charges had they been committed by mainstream media. A Facebook site memorializing 14-year-old Stephanie Rengel, who was murdered in Toronto New Year's Day, named her two juvenile accused, a violation of the Youth Criminal Justice Act. In Camrose, Alta., a site named three 15-year-olds and a 13-year-old who allegedly killed a cat in a microwave during a break-in—and threatened retribution. As repugnant as the crimes were, the right to a fair trial is at stake. On the Internet, frontier justice is increasingly in vogue. It's time to hold the sites accountable.

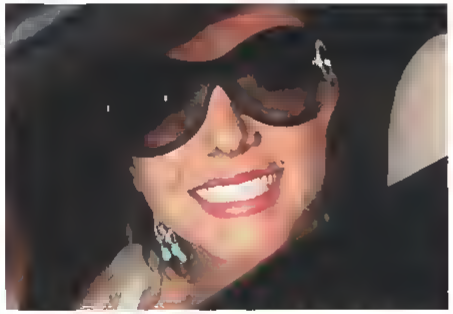
Dakar goes dark

One of the world's most famous and dangerous auto races, the Dakar rally, was cancelled after organizers received threats of a possible al-Qaeda terrorist attack. The race spans several countries in North Africa, including Mauritania, where safety concerns were raised after a family of French tourists was killed last month. Fear of terror is becoming a growing, not to mention costly, concern for major public events. Last month, the U.K. said the bill for policing the 2012 Olympics will be at least $2.4 billion (up from initial estimates of about $400 million). Terrorists killed the Dakar, let's hope it's not a sign of things to come.

Some dream

The numbers say air travel has never been safer—accidents hit a 40-year low in 2007, according to the Aircraft Crashes Record Office. But don't get too comfortable yet. U.S. authorities said this week they have real concerns about Boeing's new 787 Dreamliner jet. The computer network in the plane's cabin (which lets passengers access the Internet) is also linked to the flight and navigation systems, making the jet vulnerable to hackers who could, theoretically, take control of the plane and even crash it. Boeing has time to fix the oversight—the plane doesn't go into service until November. The train has never been so appealing.

FACE OF THE WEEK



BRITNEY SPEARS was all smiles this week, just days after undergoing a psychiatric assessment at Cedars-Sinai Hospital in L.A.

Screen screams

Forget about all the Oscar buzz, bloody films like *Sweeney Todd* and *No Country for Old Men* may also be keeping our streets a bit safer. In a new study, Gordon Dahl and Stefano DellaVigna, economists at the University of California, argue that in the last 10 years the screening of violent films has resulted in about 1,000 fewer assaults per week in the U.S. Instead of getting drunk and committing violent crimes, bad guys opt for a comfy theatre, a tub of popcorn and a shoot 'em up. We suggest free movie nights in rough neighbourhoods.

The big squeeze

Add another to the list of health risks linked to obesity: death by car crash. According to the latest statistics, the more you weigh, the less likely you are to wear a seat belt. In fact, 30 per cent of obese people say they do not buckle up, mainly because seat belts are uncomfortable. Researchers hope the findings will encourage manufacturers to promote seat-belt extenders. Or, overweight drivers can move to Australia. The government down under is planning to introduce free stomach stapling surgery for the morbidly obese. M

MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON GREEN QUEEN ELIZABETH MAY'S BROADWAY REUNION WITH PAUL NEWMAN

ADVICE FROM MAY'S STYLIST AND A TASTY RECIPE FOR WHITE CHEDDAR CHEESE MELTS



MAY entertains (in a non-floral dress) at her Epiphany party

As part of her New Year's Eve weekend, Green party Leader **Elizabeth May** took her daughter, **Victoria Cate**, and her daughter's best friend, 16-year-old **Kaila Remillard** (a staunch Liberal party supporter), to a Broadway performance of *Cyrano de Bergerac* starring **Kevin Kline**. At the theatre, May bumped into iconic acting couple **Paul Newman** and **Joanne Woodward**. Newman and Woodward knew May's American activist mother **Stephanie May** well. The Green leader says Newman and Woodward helped her mom with anti-war fundraisers in the late sixties and seventies by volunteering their Connecticut home. When May's family moved to Nova Scotia, everyone lost touch. "Where did you guys go?" Newman asked May at the *Cyrano* production. "They didn't have any idea I was the leader of the Green Party of Canada," says May, who then had to explain to her daughter who Paul Newman was. She tried first with "He's the guy on the salad dressings," and then listed some of Newman's films. By sheer coincidence, when May and the teens returned to their hotel room, the 1969 Newman classic *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* was on TV.

This week May held her annual Jan. 6 Epiphany party in her Ottawa home. But because she is running in the Nova Scotia riding of Central Nova against Defence Minister **Peter MacKay**, for the first time she also held an Advent party in her New Glasgow, N.S., home in December. While she was there, she went to her old family abode and opened the box of Christmas ornaments her mother, who died in 2003, had packed away. They included decorations May had made as a child. So this year there was a tree in New Glasgow, but not one in Ottawa, where her tradition has always been to toss the tree at midnight on Epiphany. (May could have switched that to a pumpkin toss this year: there were two frozen ones, presumably left over from Halloween, under the snow and ice on the side of May's Ottawa porch.)



VICTORIA CATE (right), Kaila (left), Newman



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MITCHEL RAPHAEL

MIGUEL AGUILAR/CP

At the Epiphany party, the hors d'oeuvres included croissants filled with oysters, and cheese melts from a recipe May says came from Grade 5 home economics: grated white cheddar, grated onions, Dijon mustard and Worcestershire sauce on bread crusts, baked in the oven. Swedish Ambassador **Ingrid Iremark** arrived with a gift bag of Swedish environmental initiative brochures and a sample CD of Swedish music. May met the Swedish ambassador last summer when they were both taking the bus in Ottawa. May's stylist/friend **Shelagh M'Gonigle** was also there. M'Gonigle, who says she was a Progressive Conservative when she was 8, makes sure May wears solid colours. "I like florals," says May. "But Shelagh said no one over 50 should wear florals." May is 53. May and M'Gonigle shop together at Ottawa's second-hand store Clothes Encounters of the Second Kind.

Since Capital Diary's visit last year to the annual party, May has scored a huge eco-coup on the home front. She has finally convinced her basement tenant to switch from Tide to Ecolever ecological laundry wash. May has had many tenants over the years, among them **Jill DeYoung**, who was at the party. DeYoung says she is part of a secret Facebook group of people who have lived in May's Ottawa home.



THE DOLL collection, (inset) the new Lesotho doll

May's international doll collection, which she keeps in her living room, got a new addition this year: a doll from Help Lesotho, an Ottawa-based NGO. The proceeds from the doll sale help AIDS orphans in Lesotho.

Before May became Green party leader, MPs attended her annual party in droves. Not many politicians showed up this year, though Liberal MPs **John Godfrey** and **Mauril Bélanger** put in appearances.

The day after her party, May got her final mark from the course she has been taking toward a theology degree at Ottawa's Saint Paul University. She got an A on the final exam. Not bad, considering that the exam ran from 9 a.m. until noon the same day. May had a Green party press conference at 11:30 a.m. and had to skip out early. The course was on politics and ethics. M

ON THE WEB: For more Ottawa outtakes or to contact Mitchel Raphael, visit **macleans.ca/mitchelraphael**

A hunger for the real, and Obama's feeding it



ANDREW COYNE

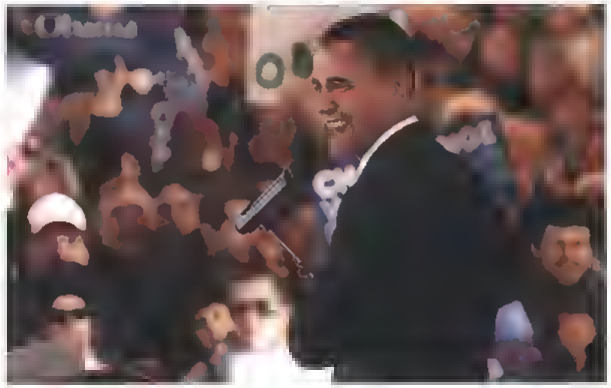
Somewhere between Christmas and New Year's, as the Iowa caucuses approached, a remarkable "click" moment happened in American political life. A figure who had until then been vaguely present in most people's consciousness, a pleasant but blurred face on the edge of their field of vision, suddenly came into focus. In that moment, the accumulated impressions of a thousand different exposures overlapped and coalesced, and the phenomenon that is now Barack Obama was born.

The popular enthusiasm he has ignited is obviously something highly unusual, and while it is uncertain whether it can be sustained under the scrutiny to which he will now be exposed—and after the New Hampshire shocker, it's clear the only certainty is uncertainty—this is more than a mere media infatuation. While he attracts support from a broad swath of the political spectrum, including many Republicans, neither can he be written off as an empty canvas, onto which may be projected whatever his observers want to believe. There is something real at work here, not empty glamour or—that telltale sign of a fake—Kennedy mimicry.

Some of it obviously has to do with the candidate himself. To describe this as mere "likeability," as a moderator in one of the debates had it, is too shallow. Lots of people in politics are likeable; they don't get lines forming around the block to hear them speak. Yes, he is engaging, but what people sense in him is something more than that. It is authenticity. I don't mean that he goes around telling people exactly what he thinks all the time, or that he is unconcerned with appearances. But the image he presents seems to people to be more or less an emanation of who he really is, and who he is seems to be connected to reality. (Gary Hart intrigued people at first, but as closer observation turned up layer upon layer of illusion, his appeal faded. I doubt that will happen this time.)

Yet not even his admirers, I think, would claim there was much that was truly extraordinary about him. He is talented, but no more so than many others in public life. He is a good speaker, but not a great one. His life story is interesting, but his legislative record is not particularly distinguished.

Indeed, part of what makes him unusual, in a sense, is his very ordinariness. He is a smart, young lawyer, of a kind that many of us might have met: shrewder than most, perhaps, more ambitious, certainly, more self-aware, more thoughtful, but nevertheless familiar. When he speaks, it is in an idiom we can recognize, not in that ghastly mixture of evasion and cliche that so many politicians adopt.



Lots of politicians are likeable; they don't get lines around the block to hear them speak

Yet that in itself bespeaks a certain *gravitas*. To remain yourself in a profession where the temptation at every moment is to the false, to trust your own judgment when a dozen different advisers are whispering in your ear, requires a serenity and a self-knowledge that is given to few. That, I think, is the key: self-knowledge. The story told in his autobiography, *Dreams From My Father*, of a boy of mixed racial heritage slowly piecing together his identity, is of a progression toward authenticity, rather than the reverse. And it gives his core message, of national reconciliation, a formidable personal resonance.

Having reconciled his own conflicted racial identity, he invites the country to engage in something of the same exercise. He does not profess to represent black Americans to white, as an earlier generation of black leaders did. But neither does he, in effect, represent white America to blacks, as an African-American who "made good." His message, rather, is of blacks and whites coming together in a common enterprise. That is what has allowed him to win in overwhelmingly white Iowa, with every chance of sweeping predominantly black South Carolina.

That same relentless balancing of opposites, that instinctive avoidance of needless antagonisms, can be seen in other aspects of his political persona. As the columnist David Brooks has put it, "Obama does not ratchet up hostilities; he restrains them. He does not lash out at perceived enemies, but is aloof from them." Brooks is not the only conservative columnist to heap praise on a man who is by any measure a liberal Democrat. In this month's *Atlantic* magazine, Andrew Sullivan sees in Obama the way out of an intra-generational struggle among baby boomers stretching back to Vietnam, and played out through a series of increasingly poisonous conflicts ever since.

Perhaps that's loading too much onto his slender shoulders. Barely two years after he was first elected to national office, and scant weeks into the primary season, Obama has already raised expectations to such dizzying heights that even a near win in New Hampshire, a result that would have seemed far out of reach only a few days ago, came off as something of a letdown. He appeals to people, not just to vote for him, but to invest their ideals in him, and many appear to be doing just that. Perhaps they should be more circumspect. But then, as Chesterton observed, "to say that a man is an idealist is merely to say that he is a man." M

ON THE WEB: For more Andrew Coyne visit his blog at **www.macleans.ca/andrewcoyne**

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That's the trouble with abusing the f-word



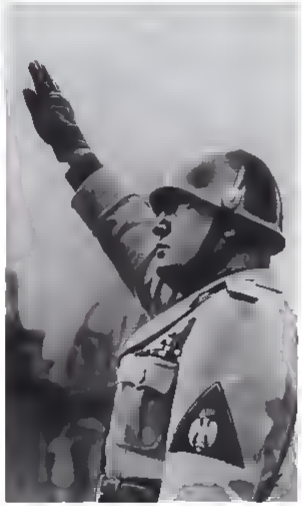
ANDREW POTTER

One of the more useful bits of Internet folk wisdom is the following maxim: the longer an online discussion grows, the higher the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler. Coined by online activist and lawyer Mike Godwin in 1990, Godwin's Law holds true across all media: given any political debate of sufficient length, sooner or later someone will accuse his opponent of being a fascist.

Given the overheated partisan character of our political culture, it is not surprising to find the "f-word" making its way into the salons of even the most respectable members of society. Among the left, it is uncontroversial to assert that George W. Bush is a fascist. That's because he is a puppet of the religious right, which is also made up of fascists, as Chris Hedges tells us in his recent book *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America*. For neo-conservatives and imperial-minded liberals such as Paul Berman and Christopher Hitchens, it is al-Qaeda and the Taliban who are the real fascists, religious zealots who have turned the worship of Allah into an "Islamofascist" cult of death. And let us not forget the eco-fascists, a term used by conservatives and market-oriented liberals to describe the more narrow tributaries of contemporary environmentalism.

Which brings us to Jonah Goldberg, author of the new book *Liberal Fascism: The Secret History of the American Left From Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning*. Goldberg is probably most familiar to Canadians as the slurpee-sucking chicken hawk who, in 2002, turned Pat Buchanan's slur about "Soviet Canuckistan" into a full-bore rant. In his *National Review* essay, "Bomb Canada: The case for war," he argued that Canada's "neurotic anti-Americanism"—traditionally manifested through policies such as single-payer health care, parliamentary democracy, and the payment of UN membership dues—had become a genuine threat to the security of the U.S. Hence the title of the essay.

Goldberg has clearly spent the past five years or so stewing over the American left (or "liberals," as lefties are known down there), which he believes has unfairly appropriated the term "fascist" as a cudgel with which to beat conservatives. Looking back over the 20th century, Goldberg sees that it is liberals, not conservatives, who are the real heirs to the fascist tradition in America. From Woodrow Wilson's propaganda ministry and FDR's militia-like Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to the cult of personality surrounding John F. Kennedy, America's progressives have consistently wrapped themselves in the language, symbols, and policies of fascism. As well they might, argues Goldberg, since modern liberalism and classical fascism have common intellectual origins. Both have faith in the power of the state as a progressive force, and hold similar positions on a range of issues, such as abortion and euthanasia. And let's not forget—Hitler was a vegetarian and the Nazis were world leaders in organic farming.



Take away from fascism the cult of war, and you're left with some costume-clad buffoons

Despite his tendency to see creeping fascism behind every tree hugger, Goldberg is a fun guy to read. He fires off a barrage of insults, comedic decoys that help distract the reader from the pockmarked logic underlying his argument. But he confuses fascism's social origins with its final essence. In Italy, for example, fascism certainly began as a socialist cause but fell far short of a serious ideological commitment. Mussolini liked to brag that he was not tied to any specific doctrine, an intellectual promiscuity he attributed to self-salvation: "With ideas as with women, the more you love them the more they make you suffer."

The effect of fascism was to transform politics from something based on reasoned argument over principles into a visceral aesthetic experience. And as soon became apparent, the most profound aesthetic experience for a fascist was violence. This is why Goldberg's imagined similarities between the uniformed members of the CCC and Mussolini's Blackshirts, or between the statist policies of the New Deal and Hitler's total command of the German economy, are preposterous. Fascists visited upon the citizens of the world a nightmare of uniformed violence, but the key element of the equation was not the uniforms—it was the violence. If you take away from fascism the cult of war, then all you're left with are a bunch of costume-clad buffoons chanting slogans—something that would turn every high-school pep rally into the moral equivalent of Kristallnacht.

What is ultimately at stake here is the integrity of our vocabulary. As our society has evolved we've forged a number of moral concepts that help us make sense of what is going on—words that point to types of discrimination, like racism and sexism, or that are meant to engage our most profound sense of revulsion, like holocaust and genocide. But words are only useful as contrastive terms, and if every inter-ethnic or interracial war counts as a genocide, then the word ceases to have any meaning.

So Jonah Goldberg has a point. If we allow ourselves to call "fascist" every politician or party that we find revolting, then we are depriving ourselves of a very useful concept. But the solution to partisan idiocy is not more partisan idiocy—all things said and done, FDR was no more a fascist than George W. Bush is a terrorist. Fascism was the defining ideological development of the 20th century, and the more we use it as a weapon against our petty opponents, the more we dull our ability to understand how and why it occurred. If we lose that ability, we risk being caught off guard when an authentic form of fascism arises to threaten us once again. M

ON THE WEB: For more Andrew Potter, visit his blog at **www.macleans.ca/andrewpotter**

I feel like suing them myself but that's not the point



BARBARA AMIEL

There might have been a pianist playing at Toronto's super-fashionable Courtyard Café that July 3 in the summer of 1978. Although probably not, given it was lunchtime. Still, those were more melodious times. Schools and airports had no grating security procedures. Canada's thought police were nascent and complaints to them could be smoothed out over a plate of smoked salmon. I was shaming my salmon with the rabbi who had married me a few years earlier and had now been sent by his fellow commissioners on the Ontario Human Rights Commission to informally straighten me out.

The Manitoba and the Ontario human rights commissions had complained about an article I had written for *Maclean's* on the "British disease." The U.K. was lurching from crisis to crisis with strikes that left bodies unburied and bread unbaked. I had used the word "Huns" to explain British apathy as in "the Huns are no longer at the gate." The word was clearly used in a historical context, but to no avail. In the bowels of Manitoba, a lobby group of professional grievance collectors found solace for my wounding word in Canada's up-to-date human rights legislation. I was, *wie schrecklich*, slagging off all German Canadians. After a bout of correspondence I saw both HRCs off but not before they had tried to get me censored, possibly fired, and all behind my back. Fortunately, then editor of *Maclean's* Peter C. Newman felt I ought to be made aware of their complaints.

Cut to 2008 with *Maclean's* being asked to respond to complaints issued by various HRCs about an excerpt it published from the book *America Alone* by columnist Mark Steyn. It makes me nostalgic. The magazine's plight occurs on the 30th anniversary of my similar encounter with the same Thought Police (the gemstone is pearls). The charges against me then were as empty as the ones now brought against *Maclean's*, though as Steyn pointed out last week, the poison is not in the truth or falsehood of the complaint but the notion that it is the business of government to judge it.

In the balmy days of the seventies, human rights commissioners and their allies who monitored one's "errant" views were mainly ultra-liberals, people with whom you could, more or less, have a reasoned discussion. Indeed, I cranked out my 1980 book *Confessions* as a response to Rabbi Gunther Plaut's questions at that Courtyard Cafe luncheon about my opposition to the very existence of HRCs. Many of those old-time liberals are having spots of amnesia now about their early support for the HRCs, but never mind. One was reasonably safe in their hands then, even though you knew as surely as night follows day that the safety was temporary and their hands would not be the last ones censoring ideas.



JOHN MOORE/GETTY

The rabbi had been sent by his fellow commissioners to straighten me out

As victimhood became fashionable, unsurprisingly Canada's Thought Police expanded. A few years later, when I was editor of the *Toronto Sun*, city taxpayers footed the bill for an investigation into the newspaper's alleged "racism." I was cleared personally, but *Sun* columnist McKenzie Porter was not. Porter, an elderly British writer who yearned for the lost grandeur of the British Empire, and I had an understanding. I spiked any overly offensive columns of his but promised never to edit him. This seemed to work to his and readers' satisfaction if not Toronto's city hall.

Today, Canada's human rights industry flourishes in a barren landscape where there are no proper rules of evidence, legal procedures or public and press scrutiny. Tribunals can cause you to lose your job and fine you. Fail to answer a witness summons and you face contempt of court—possible imprisonment. Under this scenario, Steyn could become a fugitive from Canadian justice in his New Hampshire home, where he and "Tiffany" (his assistant, long rumoured to actually be Mark avoiding phone conversation with editors) could survey the plains, shotgun ready, for red-coated policemen riding over the hills. Mark has long counselled my husband to stay out of the clutches of the American judicial system. I offer him refuge in Palm Beach.

In the 1977-78 period when I was singled out, Manitoba's HRC said they were using their mandate to "educate" *Maclean's* and myself. They were not proposing to do anything else. I replied that I would use my mandate as a writer in a free country to educate them. At that time there was no Ayatollah Khomeini, no al-Qaeda. Such terrorism as there was—outside the conflict area of the Middle East—was Communist-inspired and aided the Red Brigades in Italy, the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany. New Jersey and Ontario were not seen as recruiting grounds. There were no "homegrown" terrorists as in today's U.K. But as the terror threat worsened, so did determination to appease it, and by now there are no more old-style liberals on HRCs. What George Jonas has called the "sub-liberals," those minds indifferent to the irritating complexities of democracy, have taken over. The report behind this current investigation is titled "Macleans [sic] Magazine: A Case Study of Media-Propagated Islamophobia." The brief's methodology is simplicity itself: any statement a *Maclean's* writer makes that the authors don't like they declare to be Islamophobic. *Res ipsa loquatur*.

Whether stupid or prejudiced, true or false, suppressing opinion is always bad. Seven of my columns are used as examples of Islamophobia in the report. I want to sue the authors myself for defamation, but my view of their view should not be actionable. One would think most Canadians intelligent enough to grasp that freedom doesn't mean you are free only to express nice thoughts. Freedom is not a maple-syrup nut cake to be sliced up: you cannot have some freedom of speech or freedom of speech only for those people you like. By definition, freedom is indivisible. It should be so simple really. The thing speaks for itself. M

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'You find yourself in a Kafkaesque situation where you don't know who's arresting you, why you've been arrested'

RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO TALKS WITH KENNETH WHYTE ABOUT HIS ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT IN IRAN, AND WHY HE DOESN'T WANT REVENGE

Ramin Jahanbegloo, an Iranian-Canadian academic, was arrested at Tehran's airport in April 2006 on "security" grounds and thrown in the notorious Evin prison. Accused of plotting with the United States to destabilize Iran, he was released on bail after four months in prison. His plight was the cover story of Maclean's *on June 12, 2006.*

Q: *Let me just start at the beginning of your ordeal. You were at the airport in Tehran, and what happened?*

A: I was going to a conference in Brussels and I used to be double-checked practically all the time, but this time three gentlemen came to me and said, "Follow us," and I followed them and they put me into a car, blindfolded me, and took me to Evin prison, Section 209.

Q: *Did they identify themselves?*

A: No, they didn't identify themselves, they just said, "We have some questions to ask you," and I said, "Well, I'm going to lose my flight," and they said, "Well, just a few questions. If everything's okay you can get your flight." And when we got out of the airport, they took my luggage, and so I realized—

Q: *It's more than a few questions.*

A: Yeah. And once there, they asked me to take off my clothes, and—this is a routine in the prison—I put [on] the pyjamas.

Q: *Had you been to prison before?*

A: No.

Q: *You knew you were in Evin prison?*

A: Yeah, they told me. Somebody came and touched my shoulder and said this is the last station, so I realized that I must be at Evin prison, but I didn't know that I was in Section 209.

Q: *What's the significance of Section 209?*

A: Section 209 is a special high-security prison for political prisoners in Iran which is supposed to be organized and administrated by the Ministry of Intelligence, so usually students, activists, political activists, intellectuals are taken there, journalists. Not being a political activist, I was quite surprised.

Q: *Did they start interrogating you?*

A: No. The jail-keepers took me to a small room in solitary confinement—everybody's in solitary—a room two by three metres, and with no bed, nothing, just two blankets and a light which is on 24 hours per day. And a few hours later the interrogation started.

Q: *Do they do it in your cell?*

A: No, no, always outside the cell.

Q: *And you're blindfolded?*

A: Blindfolded, face to the wall, and you hear voices, and they just ask you questions.

Q: *How did they start?*

A: It started with an affirmation, actually, from their side saying, "Well, okay, now we have an intellectual in our prison," and I said, "Maybe something's wrong, because I'm not a political activist. What am I doing here?" And they said, "Well, you know, you're preparing a soft revolution," and I said, "What is that?" I mean, the word didn't mean anything to me. "Soft revolution?" I said, "Well, I've worked for non-violence all my life and I've never been revolutionary. What kind of revolution is that? I have no idea." And, well, from there, the questions started.

Q: *Were there more accusations?*

A: Much more, spying, contacts with foreigners.

Q: *They meant Western contacts and American contacts?*

A: Yes, mainly. And later on, of course, because I have Canadian citizenship, and Canadian citizenship means a lot. To them that means being a spy. Even if dual citizenship is tolerated in Iran.

Q: *Why would they look at you as being any kind of a threat because you're Canadian?*

A: Well, it's not being a Canadian which is a threat, it's how Canada proceeds as a lawful country and as a rightful country and as a country which has always been supportive of human rights, which might create a problem for a country like Iran or for some people inside the country. And secondly, as it used to be in ex-Communist countries or in Stalin's time or Mao Zedong's time, it's very easy to accuse you of anything. If you're not a Canadian, you're something else. You're always accused—as I was accused—of working against the security of the state. That's why I called it politics of the absurd, because you find yourself in a very Kafkaesque situation like Joseph K. in Kafka's *Trial*, where when you get arrested you don't know who's arresting you, why you've been arrested, how long are you going to stay in prison. You have no lawyer. For a long period of time I couldn't see my family. So, no information comes from outside, no information gets from you to outside, so you're totally in an isolated situation.

Q: *How long did your first interrogation last?*

A: Usually interrogations were three or four times a day, and each time up to three hours, four hours sometimes.

Q: *And would they get you any hour of the day or night?*

A: Yes. And I slept only three hours. But there was another reason why I slept three hours, because in solitary confinement you can lose your mental sanity very quickly since you have no contact with anybody else and you don't know who's in the next cell, and with the thick walls you don't hear anything. I tried to ask for some reading, because in the beginning I couldn't write anything and I got the Quran and some religious books, and I was reading these religious books many, many times, and trying to make them intellectual reading. When my wife visited me after 40 days she brought me autobiographies of Mahatma Ghandi and Nehru in English which they permitted me to have, and that was lovely because I got my mind out of the cell. Later on they gave me a pen for the interrogations and I used it to write a few things on the back of the Kleenex and biscuit boxes.

Q: *How long were you in solitary altogether?*

A: Hundred twenty five days.

Q: *You were fed?*

A: I'd been fed, yeah, like all other prisoners. We could also buy a few things because they gave you some of the money you had when they arrested you. So I used to have biscuits and Kleenex boxes. I tried to do exercises every day in my small room. In the beginning, I just could tell the day and the night by the Muslim prayer voice.

Q: *You must have been scared.*

A: In the beginning very scared, because I really had no idea what's going to happen to me. Later I could talk several times on the phone with my family, but only for one minute, two minutes.

Q: *Did they ever threaten you physically, or physically harm you?*

A: No, they didn't physically harm me, actually. I had some experience of harsh talking and hard talking, but no physical torture.

Q: *What kind of harsh talking?*

A: Well, threats like, "We can put you on trial and you might spend some time in prison," and, "You might not get to see your daughter for a long period of time." When my wife used to come to prison she couldn't talk much about it, she only talked about our daughter and my mom, her own family, for a few minutes. "Everything's okay. Are you okay?" She looked at my appearance, with the beard and everything, and dirty, and I would say, "Yeah, everything's okay." And when I got out of prison, actually, when I was free I saw—my God!—what a huge amount of support, support coming from everywhere, especially from Canada, for which I'm very grateful.

Q: *There were questions as to whether or not the support and international expressions of support would help you or do more damage.*

A: You never know, but I think that it's good to support people when they are imprisoned. When I was a youngster I used to work for Amnesty International and later on I worked at United Nations.

Q: *Did they just say, one day, "Okay, you're free?"*

A: They told me—practically at the end—that they had contacts with my family and they were working on bail and they took me to the Revolutionary Court and they were asking me not to confess but they called it confession. They tell you what you've done, and they want you to know—in their terms—what you've done, like, you have contacts with foreigners, you have been to conferences where you've met Americans and some Israelis, and these kind of things. And each time I said, "Yes, I went to conferences with many other foreign people, this is my job—I'm an academic—and I've never had a political activity, and my contacts with foreign governments have never been at that level because I have no information to exchange." So, some of the ultra-conservative journalists in Iran created their own story.

Q: *And that got published?*

A: Yeah. They've written a huge book on me with this title, *Knight of the Cultural NATO*. I'm still attacked, actually, by these journalists. NATO is supposed to be a political organization and a military organization, but they created a concept which is cultural NATO which I don't understand and, like King Arthur's knights, I'm one of the knights—don't ask me which one. Kind of a huge conspiracy theory, you know?

Q: *Did they demand bail from you?*

A: No. Well, they demanded it from my wife and my mom, from my family. There's a judge who asks. Usually for people like me. It's the highest amount, $300,000, $500,000. And usually, since you don't have that much, they take your house contracts. So my family put up two house contracts as bail.

Q: *Do you still have family in Iran?*

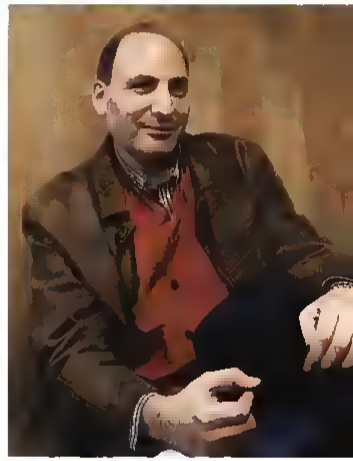
A: Yes. I have my mom and then my wife's family is still living there. But I don't want to feel like an exile. So I don't want to create this feeling for myself, that I have just destroyed my bridges with Iran and Iranian culture, which is not the case at all.

Q: *You can't be fond of the Iranian government.*

A: No, no, it's not a question of being fond of—

Q: *You're drawing a fairly sharp distinction between Iran and its people and its government.*

A: Yeah, I'm a man of culture, so I think more in terms of culture when I think about countries and identities, more than governments and politics, you know? So, for me what's most important is the people of Iran and Iranian culture, its history, its past. I think it has a very glorious history and a very important one.



'I have Canadian citizenship and that citizenship means a lot. To them that means being a spy.'

Q: *Are the Iranian people responsible for their government?*

A: People are always responsible up to some point for what they have in any kind of a country or, I would say, in a historical situation. Germans were responsible for Nazism, I would say the Chinese have been responsible for Maoism in China for some time, but they are also responsible for the changes they can make in their own cultures and in their countries. That's the good thing,

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARANTXA CEDILLO/VERAS

when you're an optimistic person—like myself—you always try to look at the noble side of human beings and not just the dark side, because it's true that my experience of prison showed me that there is such a thing as evil, which many people experienced during the Second World War, especially the Jewish people, and somehow you have to remain true to the ethical and try to find the ethical in yourself, otherwise you get lost, you get devoured by the evil. So I thought the most important thing was not to create a sense of revenge and resentment in myself. Somehow my prison days helped me to think more about how you can be truthful to ethics and how you can think against evil in politics and in everyday life on the basis of, I would say, human connectedness and the noble side of human beings.

Q *You haven't been an activist but why wouldn't an experience like you endured make you want to work for reform?*

A: I've always been a reformist, actually, I've always played my role in the public space as an intellectual and I hope to play it in the future in Canada also. I feel myself very close to certain ideas in Canada, and certain political ideas, certain people, and it could be very helpful to be a social reformer and to somehow play a public role. As a person who believes in dialogue among cultures, and I think that Canada is one of the countries where this dialogue is the most important factor for the progress—moral progress—of humanity.

Q. *Is dialogue possible with this particular regime?*

A: Yes. Maybe not with everybody inside the Iranian regime, but I would say that even in the worst situations you always find some people or an open door through which you can go and you can engage in the dialogue. In prison, I was always trying to find some humanity behind the inhuman just by talking with some of my jail keepers. We had the World Cup series and I knew that some of them liked to watch soccer, and I asked them about the scores. I mean, humanity is humanity, it's the same quest, which is timeless, and violence is timeless also. We are all capable of violence, all of us, in the public and the private arenas where we're living, but when you face it in an evil way like in a concentration camp or solitary confinement, then you have to think about it.

Q. *Do you feel you can speak freely about affairs in Iran given that your family is still back there?*

A: Yeah, up to some point I can speak freely but it depends on what type of subjects are brought up, because there are many subjects on which I don't talk because I don't want to say nonsense, and many other people have been talking, as political activists, in a better way than I do.

Q: *Do you think the piece that you wrote on Auschwitz was instrumental in your being arrested, given that President Ahmadinejad had made statements about the Holocaust around the same time?*

A: The piece was not translated into Persian. It was originally written in English and it was published also on the Net in English, so I don't know how many people have read it in Iran. I know that many people didn't like the fact that I have so many Jewish friends or I did a book with Isaiah Berlin or George Steiner, which I thought was complete nonsense because I don't choose my friends according to their faith and religion, it's their intellectual work which interests me.

Q: *Do you consider that you made a mistake to go back to Iran?*

A: No, you never make mistakes by choosing to do something. I would say it's part of my destiny.

Q: *Was that a miscalculation?*

A: No. If I have to do it again I would do it again. If there's one thing which I would like very much to do it is to be able to play a role in engaging Iran in a dialogue with the West.

Q: *That's more or less what got you arrested.*

A: I'm very much against any military intervention in the whole Middle East but also Iran, because I think it will not solve problems, it would create more problems. If I can play my role as a bridge-maker between different cultures, as I used to do it, Iran and different cultures, but also Canada and other cultures, I will, because I think democracy's about dialogue, it's not about giving lessons to others.

Q: *You would agree, though, that a dialogue requires at least two sincere partners.*

A: Yes, but you never know who's sincere and it's not by accusing the other of being insincere that you can just stop the dialogue. I think that dialogue is like democracy, it's an ongoing process. Democracy is a daily effort, dialogue is a daily effort, I would say tolerance is a daily effort.

Q: *You must be watching with some alarm, then, the discussions about Iran that have occurred in the U.S. election campaign.*

A: Yes. I have a lot of problems with the American politics in the Middle East. This is coming from somebody who was born in the Middle East, of course, and who has travelled in the Middle East, and I see a lot of fear in the hearts of people when I go to countries like Egypt, Turkey. I'm not talking about the governments but people—and this anger and this fear comes from an arrogant or violent view which is coming from the other side, and it's telling them what they have to do, what they should not do, and when they fear military intervention or the fact that somebody dictates to them what kind of politics they should have or should not have, that once again I don't think is very democratic. The role I try to play each time I went to conferences to talk to my American friends is to say, "Well, let's do it together." Democracy is not a one-way street, it's a two-way street. It's not a gift which comes from Washington to the Middle East, it's kind of a dialogue or an effort of dialogue which might come from Washington but you have to wait for the response to come from the other side, you cannot be indifferent about the response.



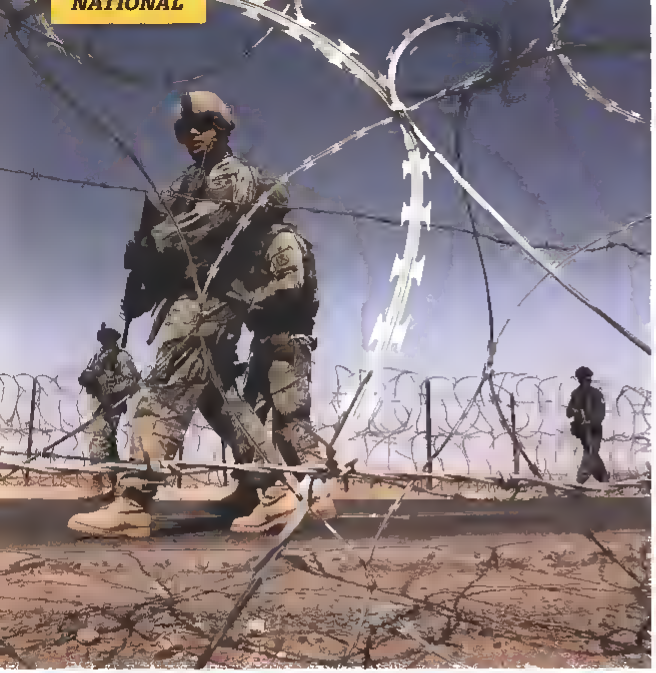
'If there's one thing I'd like to do, it's to play a role in engaging Iran in dialogue with the West'

Q: *Canada has approached things differently from the U.S. but it didn't really help us when it came time to deal with your situation or Madame Kazemi.*

A: Yes, that's true. But I think that Canada still has a lot to offer because the Canadian dream is not an American dream. The Canadian dream is much more cultural, it's much more about human rights, it's much more about the respect of others as this country has shown it to the world, and it's much less about politics and economics, as we feel it in America. This is very important. I think the 21st century will show us that. M

PHOTOGRAPH BY ARANTXA CEDILLO/VERAS





GIULIANI (right) wants to double the number of American troops serving in Afghanistan

A TROOP SURGE FOR AFGHANISTAN?

Some say a boost in numbers could fix the mess once and for all

BY CHARLIE GILLIS • In Afghanistan these days, even faint hope is hard to come by. So forgive Canada's weary soldiers if one long shot candidate in the U.S. presidential race lifted their spirits a few notches. With the eyes of America—or at least its fickle media—fixed on the party primaries last week, Rudy Giuliani called for a military "surge" in Afghanistan that in proportional terms would dwarf the one recently credited with stabilizing parts of Iraq. "One of the things we should do immediately," Giuliani told an audience at a war museum in Wolfeboro, N.H., "is double the number of our troops, our American-led combat troops, in Afghanistan."

It might have gotten greater play, considering the source. While Giuliani struggled in early Republican primaries, his 20 per cent showing in national polls means he's still a contender, and the candidate with the most to gain by talking up national security. And with Afghanistan, he wasn't exactly scoring cheap political points. In many ways, America's 26,000-strong contingent in the country is the forgotten item on the U.S. national agenda, its mission serving as an awkward reminder of the failure to capture Osama bin Laden and the seemingly endless demands of the war on terrorism. Inside the Beltway, talk of renewed commitment to Afghanistan tends to meet with ridicule. "This isn't even worth discussing," said Anthony Cordesman of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies in a typical response to Giuliani's suggestion. "I can understand why it's of interest to [Canadians]. But it's just not on the table."

At least not yet. As recently as late November, the top general in the U.S. Marine Corps was musing publicly about shipping his soldiers out of Anbar province in Iraq and directly into Afghanistan. The idea, said Commandant Gen. James Conway, would be to prevent Afghanistan from slipping into the same pattern of suicide bombings and sectarian violence that took hold in Iraq after the fall of Baghdad, and to finish Job No. 1 in the war on terrorism. "The trend lines tell us that it may be time to increase the force posture in Afghanistan," he said. "If it requires additional U.S. forces, then it goes back to our suggestion that maybe we need more Marines in there with a more kinetic bent."

The Pentagon ultimately turned down Conway's offer, saying it would pose complications to the mission's current command structure (not to mention fanning a reported leadership feud between the Marine Corps and the Army, which comprises the bulk of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan). But even as he cast cold water on the prospect of a U.S.-led troop surge, Defense Secretary Robert Gates acknowledged that 7,500 additional troops would go a long way in countering the growing violence hampering efforts to secure and rebuild the central Asian country. The question, Gates added ruefully, is where to find them.

The answer may come from the political sphere, where it turns out Giuliani isn't the only one trying to retrain the spotlight on



GORAN TOMASEVIC/REUTERS

Afghanistan. Barack Obama, the Democratic contender, has repeatedly promised to pull troops out of Iraq and redeploy them in Afghanistan and Pakistan, declaring the region "the right battlefield" in the war on terrorism. John Edwards has echoed Obama's sentiments, if not the promise to transfer soldiers from Iraq. More recently, the assassination of Pakistani presidential candidate Benazir Bhutto appears to have refocused the Bush administration's attention on Taliban and al-Qaeda activity in the area. The *New York Times* reported this week that White House security advisers are considering expanding the authority of the Central Intelligence Agency and the military to conduct more aggressive operations in the tribal areas of Pakistan, a move that would help secure security and reconstruction operations in Afghanistan.

Canada's stake in the surge debate is easy to see. With 2,500 soldiers on the ground, this country provides a little more than five per cent of the 48,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan. But its disproportionately high casualty rate—77 dead, including a respected diplomat—has underscored how much more dangerous its mission is than that of other NATO allies, centred as it is in the hot zone of Kandahar province.

A big boost in the American presence would likely do the job, say officers who have served in Afghanistan. "It would fix that dynamic our guys have seen in the past two years of clearing an area in the south, then moving onto your next problem area, only having to return to places like Panjwait and Zhari

GIULIANI IS THE LATEST TO PITCH IT, BUT MILITARY LEADERS, EVEN OBAMA, ARE TALKING ABOUT IT

districts to get the Taliban out of there," says Mike Capstick, a retired Canadian army colonel who spent a year in Afghanistan ending in the summer of 2006. Capstick's last assignment was heading a 15-member advisory team helping the new Afghan government craft its development strategy. He agrees that rebuilding is the long-term key to eroding support for the Taliban. "But the first step in counter-insurgency is providing the population with a basic level of security," he stresses. "We're still not there in so many areas. That's the advantage you get from more troops."

Of course, any such move would transform the debate over whether to extend Canada's current mission past February 2009. This may be the paramount issue for the minority Conservative government in 2008, hanging as it does on conflicting reports of progress in Afghanistan, and the Canadian public's dwindling confidence that their troops are making a difference. A U.S. surge would instantly ease those pressures, says Elinor Sloan, a security expert at Carleton University in Ottawa. It would also give the government a difficult choice to make. Should Canada stick to its current mission, knowing it has the support of American firepower? Or should it take advantage of the surge to make a partial exit from the hot zone, and take a badly needed breather?

Sloan favours the latter option. "Even if the U.S. doesn't increase its commitment, I think Canada should draw down its forces—maybe to something like 800—and then come back with greater strength in a couple of years," she says. That would open a much-needed window for Canada to replenish its ranks with recruits, acquire new equipment and make an even stronger commitment to Afghan reconstruction, Sloan explains. "I strongly believe that Afghanistan is a place where Canada should be. Go right back to square one as to why the terrorists were able to attack on 9/11. [Afghanistan] is a security threat in my view. In some ways it's not politically correct to say any longer that there is a link between the terrorist attacks on the United States and Afghanistan. But you need to stabilize that country, and there's an important humanitarian aspect to doing that. I think it makes a difference for the Canadian Forces to be there."

Not everyone, however, sees great benefit in a massive influx of American GIs. Sean Maloney, a military historian at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ont., who has toured extensively with Canadian troops in Kandahar (*Maclean's* has published several of his first-hand accounts), cautions against creating a fortress-like atmosphere in the country. "This whole idea that the media is perpetuating that the country is about to collapse to the Taliban is wrong," he says. "There has been an increase in activity in a few key areas, but it's not preventing most of the development work from getting done. We're there to build capacity, and to shield their redevelopment effort. If we flood the country with soldiers, that's going to send the wrong message."

Maloney sees benefit only in a limited increase in specific types of units from the United States. Once's special operations squads, whom he says represent the best weapon against Taliban insurgents using remote villages and the rugged Pakistan borderlands as cover. Another is so-called "omelets," or "operational mentoring and liaison teams," which would help train Afghan soldiers and officers as part of a long-term stabilization effort. Still, Canadian soldiers are bound to welcome whatever support happens to come their way. With little in the way of infrastructure and social institutions, stabilizing Afghanistan is clearly a challenge to be measured in years. It's already been five since the U.S. took its eye off the land where the Sept. 11 plot was hatched, and turned its attention to Iraq. At this stage, it hardly seems unreasonable to expect a bit of backup. M

LISA HORNAK/REUTERS

FIRE IN THE MOUNTAINS

In scenic Bury, Que., a plan to revamp the fire squad unleashes a feud

BY MARTIN PATRIQUIN • The town of Bury looks like any other sleepy, snow-quilted Eastern Townships burg. There are four churches off the main drag, but no restaurants, stores or police station, the town of 1,200, located 200 km east of Montreal, is remarkable only by the smattering of Canadian flags and a few fleur-de-lys swaying lazily above the chimneys. You could blink and miss it—but then, you'd miss the show.

Since June 2006, every Bury town council meeting has been conducted under the watchful eyes of several Surete du Quebec officers who drive in from neighbouring Cookshire. Their presence is required because bucolic little Bury is home to a caustic, xenophobic, often absurd dispute between English and French, of the type not seen in Quebec for decades. Strong words have been exchanged, threats uttered, and shoving matches have broken out in council meetings. Children have thrown eggs at the mayor's house, and the mayor has chased them into the trees behind his property.

The tiff began banally enough last year, when the mayor, Marc-Jacques Gosselin, proposed to revamp the volunteer firefighting squad to include more French members—or fewer English ones—and wound up pitching the town's linguistic groups against one another. Battle lines aren't always clear. Much of Bury's English population, opined Councillor James Cork—an anglophone himself—in an open letter to the town recently, are "chimpanzees," and members of "a cult of hate-filled anti-French lowbrows." Cork labelled one of these, a minister, "a piece of Toronto Anglican trash." On the flip side, when called to a house fire in town, one English firefighter suggested the brigade let it burn down, since it was owned by a francophone.

Townshippers, English and French alike, have long touted their gentility toward one another. Through the '70s and '80s, both groups stood politely by, for the most part, as language politics churned much of the province into a froth. Even today, Anglo-French relations in the region are pretty harmonious, and Gosselin has said there is no

problem in his town—only a few unfortunates who can't accept Bury's French reality

Certainly, Bury has undergone a demographic shift. The town was founded in 1855 by English immigrants. The first French settlers didn't arrive until the early 1900s, and as late as 1971 the English outnumbered them two to one. Today, the numbers are reversed: there are now roughly double the number of French. The English have either literally or figuratively moved on.

The mayor says any resentment toward the French is but a few ruffians poisoning the bunch. Still, his written words belie his own rosy assessment. In an invective-laden letter to the province's public safety ministry, obtained by *Maclean's*, Gosselin excoriated the town's English for being xenophobic, inward-looking and bitter in the face of dwindling numbers and slackening power. Referring to himself throughout in the third person, he said there would be little resistance to his "modern, progressive" leadership were his name Chapman, Berwick, Pope or any other English moniker typical of the area. "They established a kingdom here, and they are scared of losing power," he wrote in June 2006.

Several English residents, Gosselin says, have uttered death threats in his direction, telling him he's an outsider and should leave. His house has been pelted with eggs and paintballs and his windows treated to an empty 26-oz. bottle of rum. He says French councillors have been verbally and physically assaulted—including former councilman Yvon Begin, who says he was roughed up by several firemen. Gosselin saves most of his rhetorical venom for Walter Dougherty, one of two dissenting councillors on the six-member board, calling him "a vampire, a scavenger, [and] a bloated clam without a backbone." (Dougherty lives just beyond spitting distance from Gosselin, which is probably a good thing.)

The war of rhetoric has persisted since Gosselin's election in 2005. One of his first acts in office was to double the salary of the mayor and council members, which irked his electorate to no end. His second was more controversial still: he proposed that the former town hall be turned into a library. The issue was put to a referendum, and the pro-library vote won by 52 per cent. Gosselin maintains the English overwhelmingly voted "No."

The linguistic mess was reignited after council's 2006 decision to revamp the volunteer firefighters. Gosselin, along with five of six councillors, considered the 22-member primarily anglophone brigade to be a bastion of English privilege—"brown-shirted fascists," he wrote in his letter—and woefully unqualified at that. Twelve of the firefighters, all Anglos, made a show of handing in their pagers at the next council meeting.

Subsequent episodes haven't lacked in theatrics. Shortly before Canada Day last year, one of Gosselin's neighbours overturned her lawnmower bag full of cut grass in front of the mayor's house. Another, Bill Murray, planted a miniature Canadian flag on top—a lighthearted poke, Murray says, at the mayor's separatist leanings. Gosselin called in the police and refused to march in Bury's Canada Day parade, saying he was afraid for his well-being.

In recent months, Rev. Sister Mary Florence Liew, a Cookshire resident who preaches to Bury's Anglican faithful, has found herself swept into the Bury battle. She attends council meetings, and has drawn the wrath of Gosselin and Cork by asking for English translations during council. (The meetings are primarily in French, though translations are provided when asked.) Fluent in seven languages, none of them French, Liew has taken to addressing council in Mandarin to draw attention to her plight. Gosselin and Cork, she has suggested (in English), should resign and seek psychiatric help.

Liew isn't alone. The Bury Citizens' Association formed last year specifically to oust Gosselin. "When the English people of this village have a bloody bone to chew on, they go at it," Gosselin says. When told several signatories behind the association have French surnames, he interrupts. "You have to be careful," he says. "Many of those people are married to English people."

In effect, he is right. Bury as a whole is home to a large number of English-French families. Between 30 and 35 per cent of kids at the local English elementary school are French, permitted to attend because one of their parents speaks the language of Shakespeare. The most recent Statistics Canada census reveals the dwindling number of English- and French-only speakers: less than half of Bury's 375 English souls can't speak French. Meanwhile, 400 people signed a petition calling for the council to resign last year—a petition, incidentally, started by a francophone.

"There is no problem between the groups," says Jocelyn Blais, a unilingual francophone cabinetmaker. "Some of the best people I know in this town are English." The only linguistic problem, he says, is the one imagined and perpetuated by the mayor. "He's created an atmosphere that wasn't here before." M

CHAOS AT A TOWN MEETING in Bury; Sûreté officers were called in to evacuate the hall



THE MAYOR ATTACKED THE ANGLOS, CALLING ONE COLLEAGUE A 'BLOATED CLAM'

PERRY BEATON

FOR THE RECORD

THEY'LL HAVE DINNER, BUT WILL ANYONE SCORE?

"We're hoping the federal government will be taking a more hands-on approach, because until now they've been very hands off"—an Ontario provincial official on this Friday's federal-provincial meeting. The premiers are expected, over dinner, to ask for more money and Prime Minister Harper will probably refuse. Manitoba Premier Gary Doer says: "Discussions with the Prime Minister are not a one-night stand."

GETTING TO WORK

Ottawa's breakthrough welfare program earns praise, but it's qualified

BY PETER SHAWN TAYLOR • Canada's federal social programs can be a regular alphabet soup of acronyms. There's the CCTB (Canada Child Tax Benefit), the NCB (National Child Benefit) and the recent UCCB (Universal Child Care Benefit). Nothing exactly rolls off the tongue, though the newest—WITB (Working Income Tax Benefit)—at least has a nickname. Ottawa bureaucrats are calling it "Whitby," which just happens to be Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's home riding. The minister is reportedly pleased as punch. He may be the only one. Despite the fact that the WITB is perhaps the most significant new federal social policy in a decade, even supporters of the concept are being deliberately qualified in their praise.

The WITB is designed to tackle the dreaded welfare wall—that bane of anti-poverty groups, governments and economists, to say nothing of actual low-income Canadians. Anyone looking to move from welfare to work faces substantial disincentives, says Don Drummond, chief economist at TD Bank. The welfare cheques stop coming, and other benefits like subsidized housing, drug benefits or child care, might also cease or be clawed back. And of course workers have to pay taxes on their income, in addition to new work expenses like clothing and transportation.

"It creates an extraordinarily high effective tax rate for someone who is trying to leave welfare," Drummond says. The welfare wall can be as high as 78 per cent—that is, for every dollar earned 78 cents are lost to taxes and clawbacks.

Beginning this month, WITB will provide low-income, working Canadians with a cash benefit of up to $1,000 to help them over the welfare wall. Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin first unveiled the idea in 2005, it was Stephen Harper's 2007 budget that made it reality. But the notion of paying people to choose work over welfare has a long and successful track record in the U.S.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a program similar to WITB, is Washington's favourite anti-poverty program. "By any standard it has been a very effective program," says Robert Lerman, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute, a U.S. think tank. The US$40-billion EITC reaches one fifth of all American families and is credited with lowering the child poverty rate by 25 per cent. Its maximum cash benefit is US$4,716, although it pays out partial benefits to families with incomes all the way up to US$40,000. And because it was invented by the Nixon administration in 1975, and greatly expanded by Bill Clinton in the 1990s, both Republicans and Democrats can claim it's theirs.

The WITB borrows heavily from the EITC, but subsidizing work for low-income Canadians was also the subject of one of this country's largest social experiments. The Self-Sufficiency Project, undertaken from 1992 to 2002, involved 9,000 single mothers in New Brunswick and B.C. SSP nearly doubled the employment incomes of participants who found a job. Compared with their peers, SSP recipients got jobs sooner and stayed employed longer. And since they were off welfare and paying taxes, the net cost was far less than the subsidies themselves.



'IT'S HARD TO GET EXCITED ABOUT A CHEQUE THAT MIGHT TAKE 16 MONTHS TO ARRIVE'



TARA WALTON/TORONTO STAR; TOM HANSON/CP

FLAHERTY'S program seeks to remove the disincentives to getting off welfare

Both left-wing policy advocates and right-wing economists agree the WITB is good news. Yet no one is entirely satisfied. "I would call it modest, perhaps even modestly modest," says Michael Mendelson, senior scholar at the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. Since WITB benefits decline as incomes rise, and run out at just $21,167 in annual earnings, the impact on the working poor is limited. "If you are working full-time at a minimum wage job, you probably aren't going to get much out of this. It's too small and too narrowly focused," he says.

Mendelson also quibbles with Ottawa's decision to deliver the WITB through the tax system. "If we're trying to create an incentive for people to leave welfare and find a job, it's pretty hard to get excited about a cheque that might take 16 months to arrive," he laments. Ottawa should have let the provinces run the WITB through their welfare systems, which would permit monthly payments, Mendelson says. "But the feds want to run their own program so they get the political kudos for it."

William Scarth, an economist at McMaster University in Hamilton, also has qualified praise for the new plan. "It stimulates employment rather than subsidizes people not to work," he says. "So it's a fundamental and beneficial change." Yet Scarth too would prefer to see a much larger WITB. This could not only provide cash to more low-income Canadians, but also supplant other federal policies. "If you look at the experience in the U.S., the EITC has been expanded to the point where they've been able to eliminate a lot of their less effective social programs," he notes. For instance, Scarth would prefer to see the WITB take over from Employment Insurance—replacing the flawed EI with something that actually promotes employment.

Both Scarth and Mendelson hold out hope that the WITB's small $550-million annual budget is merely a test run for something that will grow over time. The fact that both Conservatives and Liberals claim the idea as their own, as is the case in the U.S., may bode well for the program's future. Last year's Throne Speech saw the Harper government make specific mention of the program. And in a recent speech unveiling his own poverty platform, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion promised a massive expansion of the WITB.

Right or left, Liberal or Conservative, every one seems to agree it's a step in the right direction. It just ought to be a bigger step. M

One orchestra that can't get out of the pit

BY NICHOLAS KÖHLER • A couple of days after Christmas, Linda Bardutz, principal cellist with the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra for most of the last two decades, received notice via email that she'd been fired. The dismissal was just the latest in a Job like series of misadventures for Bardutz, one of the top classical musicians in Western Canada.

In August, conductor Douglas Sanford filed a defamation suit against Bardutz, five of her fellow musicians, and a number of other parties. The suit centres on a union steward's report leaked to the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the Canada Council for the Arts detailing Sanford's alleged workplace bullying, including "physical, psychological, and emotional abuse." His gambit, likely the first time a conductor has ever sued his own musicians, garnered worldwide attention. Still, rehearsals and performances continued at the SSO, the parties are now in mediation.

Bardutz met with more trouble after the SSO dropped a concert in November. She was one of a number of musicians who argued the evening's program was unworkable; a union letter followed up on these concerns. Then an anonymous fax sent to the CBC accused only Bardutz of sabotaging the concert. Her dismissal, her union says, followed failed attempts to arrange a meeting with SSO management to discuss disciplinary measures related to the cancellation. (The orchestra would not comment.) Bardutz appealed the decision, which made front-page news in Saskatoon. So too did an admission by the SSO that it is now some $300,000 in debt. It's clear the orchestra is in deep trouble. Indeed, this week, just days after her dismissal, the SSO flip flopped, reinstating Bardutz and agreeing to issue a "mutual statement of regret" alongside her union. It wasn't clear at press time whether Bardutz would accept the offer. Many in Saskatoon always knew she wasn't at fault: days earlier, Bardutz had received an envelope in the mail from a supporter containing a letter of condolence—and a cheque. M



THE LATEST blow at the SSO was Bardutz getting fired

Who will save the modernist legacy in B.C.?



THE DAVID GRAHAM HOUSE was unwanted by its new owners

BY NANCY MACDONALD • The December demolition of a West Vancouver house designed by renowned Canadian architect Arthur Erickson has given a new urgency to efforts to preserve Vancouver's disappearing modernist heritage. The David Graham house, an architectural icon built in 1963—and featured in a four-page spread in *Life* magazine in 1968—helped build Erickson's reputation as one of the world's leading architects, says Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, head of art history at the University of British Columbia.

The "intensely significant" wood-and-glass home, built into a cliff face 40 feet above the sea, was "West Coast modernism at its best," he says. Owner Shiraz Lalji, a London-based property developer—whose media shy family is ranked 50th-richest in the country by *Canadian Business* magazine—was well aware of its significance, and of the last-minute push to protect it as an historic site. No dice. Lalji is planning a new home for the site.

Preservationists' worries now turn to B.C. Binning's 1941 West Vancouver home, where the artist lived and worked until his death in 1976, and where Jessie, his widow, lived until her death last May. Ten days after Erickson's Graham House fell, the geometric Binning House, a National Heritage site credited with kick-starting the West Coast modernist style, was put up for sale. The non-profit Land Conservancy of British Columbia, however, mindful of the grief over the Graham House, is talking to the estate about taking over stewardship of the artist's murals, both inside and out.

The destruction of Erickson's early masterpiece was "tragic," according to the 83 year old architect. Conservationists will have to be nimble if they want to prevent further tragedies in a city where ocean views are in high demand and land values have skyrocketed. M

Native smoke isn't always a sign of fire

BY MARTIN PATRIQUIN • The illegal trade in tobacco on the Kahnawake reserve seems plain enough. There are hundreds of smoke shops lining the highways and roads of this community of about 8,000, located across the St. Lawrence from Montreal among the bedroom communities of Chateauguay and Candiac. According to a recent report from Quebec's Public Security Ministry, the reserve's location fuels the province's illegal tobacco trade. "Federal tobacco licences issued in native territories has contributed to the amount of contraband tobacco in Quebec," says the document, displayed on the ministry website. Native leaders, the report adds, have stymied federal and provincial inspectors from visiting tobacco production facilities.



KAHNAWAKE'S REPUTATION for smuggling is getting challenged

But there's more going on here than meets the eye. Tom O'Connell, an executive with Swirling Wind Tobacco, has been trying to sell cigarettes legally for two years. "We've had federal and provincial inspectors in here many times," O'Connell says. "We have our federal licence, and we've been told that our provincial licence is forthcoming." Although incorporated in 2005, the company has yet to make a single cigarette: it can't without provincial benediction. The company has letters of intent to sell in Cyprus, Lebanon and elsewhere, but can't even send a sample to potential clients. Noting Kahnawake's reputation as a smuggling haven, O'Connell laments the "assumption that everything that comes from natives is illegal."

That's quite an assumption, given the recent history of the smuggling trade in this country. In the '90s, it wasn't native companies but the tobacco giant then known as RJR Macdonald that was behind a huge smuggling scheme designed to avoid the excise tax, which reportedly cost the federal government $1.5 billion in lost revenue—far more than all of Kahnawake's smoke shops combined. M

GETTY CP







OBAMARAMA!

THE SPECTACLE that Barack Obama serves up is like nothing available elsewhere on the presidential campaign trail

CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

How Barack Obama has made this the most riveting presidential race in decades

BY LUIZA CH. SAVAGE

IT'S THE DAY BEFORE the electrifying end to the closely contested New Hampshire primary, and Barack Obama, the 46-year-old first-term senator from Illinois and son of a white woman from Kansas and a black man from Kenya, is in an old theatre in Lebanon, a mountain town near the Vermont border, about to entrance yet another overwhelmingly white audience with his unique talent of channelling John F. Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. in a single speech.

His unmarked black campaign bus, unusual for the absence of the candidate's name or face emblazoned on it, has rambled here over winding highways carved out of mountains, past snow coloured skies and occasional "Moose Crossing" signs, trailed by three SUVs of Secret Service detail, a van full of campaign staffers, and two Greyhound-size buses stuffed with reporters from three continents.

The line of people wanting to get into the theatre runs along the town's main square and extends for several blocks. Obama has already been to the overflow room, where several hundred people wait to hear his voice pumped in. Elena Milius, 19, a student from Lebanon, arrived an hour and a half early to hear the senator. She's already been to see Hillary Clinton and John Edwards and remains undecided. "I am here so I can decide. I hope he will be more specific about his policies. I'm looking to be inspired."

By the end of the day, she will be. The spectacle that Obama serves up is like nothing available anywhere else on the campaign trail. Not in the trial lawyer appeals of John Edwards, not in the folksy Biblical parables of Republican Mike Huckabee, nor in the "straight talk" of maverick Republican John McCain. And certainly not in the earnest policy wonkery served up at campaign stops by Clinton. Inside the Lebanon Opera House, Obama takes the stage, relaxed in a crisp dark suit and tie. He strikes the languid yet elegant pose that so often gets him compared to a jazz musician. As he speaks, he begins informally, in an intimate, even self-mocking tone, then moves seamlessly between the analytic discourse of the University of Chicago law instructor he once was, and the occasional cadences of a black preacher, which he's never been.

By the end, as with each of his performances, he winds up to a thundering appeal to national unity, idealism and history-making that transports the mostly white middle-class voters to—at least in their imaginations—the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, marching for something greater than themselves.

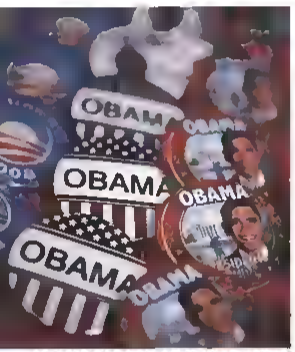
It is the magic touch that delivered the voters of Iowa, where fewer than three per cent were African American, to Obama. And it is the same magic touch that will almost deliver New Hampshire to the upstart young politician. Yes, he will go on to lose—very narrowly—to Clinton and her political juggernaut. But there is little doubt that voters in Iowa, and now in New Hampshire, have witnessed the making of a political superstar. There was a time when pundits rated his chances slim—too little, too soon, they said about his lack of experience. Pollsters also placed him far behind Clinton. And yet here he is, having made a Democratic nomination process that was to be a former first lady's coronation into a true political horse race.

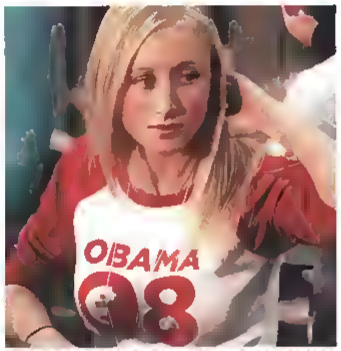
In Lebanon, Obama starts, as always, by thanking his local organizer, an orational springboard for reminding his audience that he began his career after Harvard Law School—where he had been president of the law review—as a community organizer in Chicago, working for a group of churches trying to find jobs and training for laid-off steelworkers. The Lebanon organizer is a heavy-set man in a baseball cap called Big Dave. Calling him to the stage, Obama tells the audience that Big Dave won't eat or sleep until he gets them all out to the polls. He asks the group to sign supporter cards, and requests that undecided voters raise their hands. About a quarter of the room does so, as do some people in the overflow room, even though Obama is not there to see them. "We've got some live ones over there, Dave!" he says. "We are coming after you, and coming after you hard," he threatens with a smile, as he does at every stop—fun and cute, until he gets down to business.

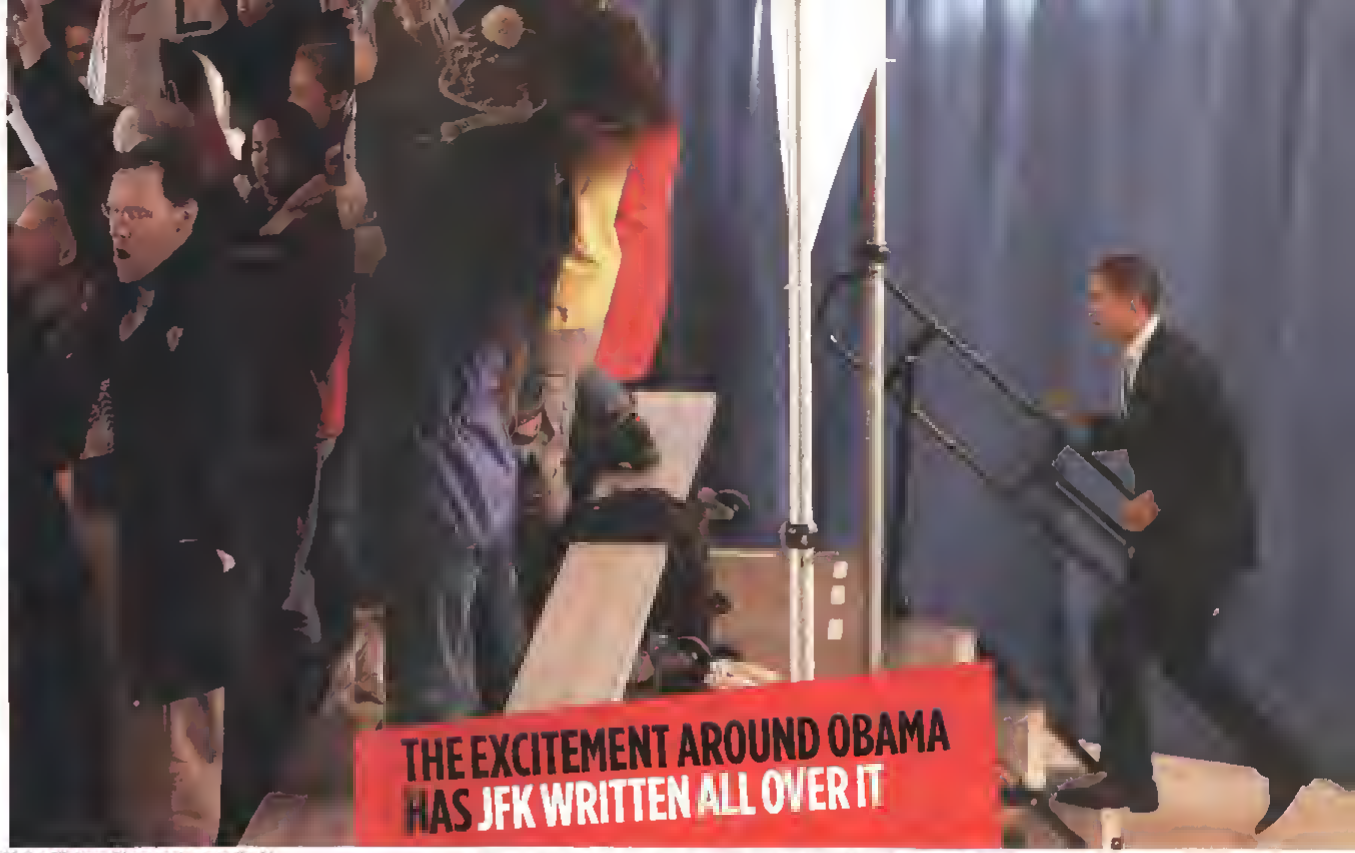
"There is something going on out there, Lebanon," he confides in his smooth, deep voice, now a bit gravelly from constant use and an incipient cold. "There is something stirring in the air. We heard it last week in Iowa when the American people stood up and said, it's time for a new beginning." Then he begins to crank it up. "It will be your turn to stand up and say to the rest of the country, the time for change has come." And louder: "To stand together and say that we are *one* nation, *one* people, and we are no longer going to accept a politics that is not serving the interests of ordinary Americans!"

The key voters in New Hampshire are the independents—registered to neither Democratic nor Republican parties but free to vote in the primaries of either. They are the ones who helped John McCain take this state in the Republican race of 2000, and they are key to Obama's strategy. He pushes hard to reach them—attacking partisanship rather than attacking Republicans. "We've had enough of the partisan food fight," Obama declares. "We don't like the trivialization of our politics. We don't like the petty point scoring. We don't want any more game playing," he bellows. And then, with a dig at Clinton, he adds: "We don't need somebody who plays the game









THE EXCITEMENT AROUND OBAMA HAS JFK WRITTEN ALL OVER IT

VOTERS AT OBAMA EVENTS are tired of polarization, and they lump the Bushes together with the Clintons. Obama acts accordingly

M. SPENCER GREEN/AP

JIM YOUNG/REUTERS. EMMANUEL DUNAND/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

better." What Obama offers is "not ideology, but practical common sense solutions."

IT'S SEXY STUFF. The voters at Obama events consistently say that they want an end to partisan polarization, and on that score they lump the Bushes together with the Clintons. Obama is very conscious of this, and acts accordingly. Later that day, at a rally in the city of Rochester, a group of anti-abortion protesters begins to heckle him. Obama begins by dismissing them, then stops himself. "It takes courage to stand in the middle of people who disagree with you and make your voice heard," he says.

Amy Bunker, 29, a special education worker attending the Rochester event, says she's never fallen for a candidate quite this hard. "It just hit me like a wave," she says. "He's one of the only candidates who has the power to unify on so many levels—not just race. To have him as the representative of the nation—I'm just so revved up about it. I keep imagining him as Mr. President."

In every speech, Obama launches into his vision for what he calls "a new governing majority—of bringing Democrats, independents and Republicans together to make change. He wants to offer health insurance to the uninsured—but not make it mandatory, as Clinton would. "We don't have to agree on everything to agree on something," he says.

He is for capitalism, but wants corporations to honour their pension obligations; for free trade, but wants labour and environmental protections in agreements. Obama, who unlike Clinton and Edwards did not support the Iraq war at the beginning, doesn't promise to pull troops out, but only to "begin the process of ending this war." And, he adds, "I will finish the fight against al-Qaeda in Afghanistan—which is where we should have been focused."

He tells his audience he is not running out of long-held ambition (take that, Hillary) or out of a sense that "it's owed to me" (and that). Rather, it's because of "what Dr. King called the fierce urgency of *now*—that hour is almost upon us. The nation is at war. The planet is in peril[...]." A crescendo begins. "Americans are decent, honourable and generous, they are not as divided as our politics suggest." Together, he says, "There is no challenge we could not solve. No destiny we could not fulfill." The audience claps and hollers.

Obama ramps it up as he arrives at one of his favourite parts, denying the sceptics and cynics who, he says, claim that "Obama has not been in Washington long enough. He needs to be stewed and seasoned a little bit more. We need to boil all the hope out of him, so he sounds like us. Then, only *then*, he will be ready." By now there is wild applause—people are jumping to their feet. "We love you," someone shouts. And he responds, "I love you too, sweetie!"

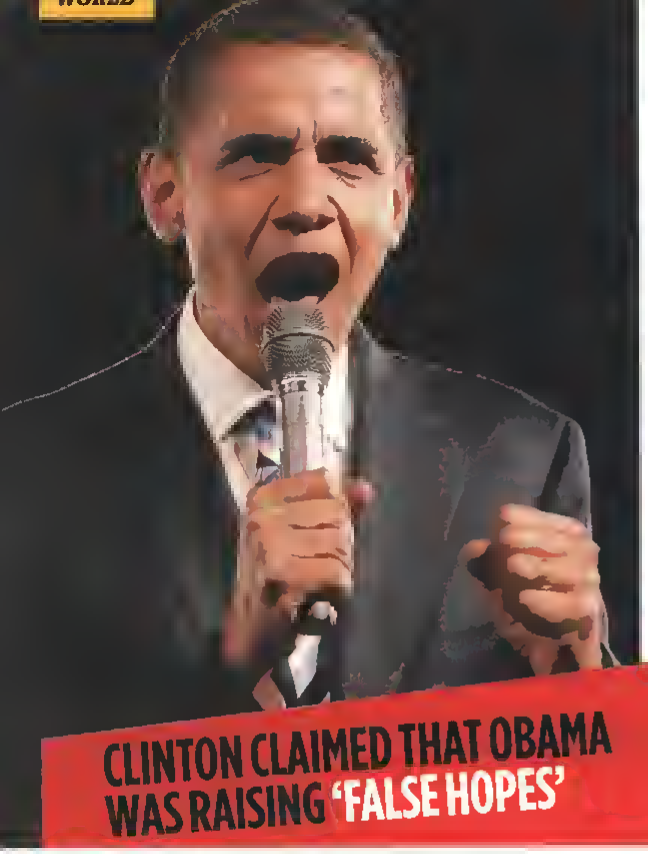
LOVE WAS IN THE AIR the day before as well when more than 3,000 people filled two gymnasiums—one of them for the overflow crowd—in the city of Nashua to hear Obama. The line outside stretched for a mile, and people kept coming. "I'm inspired by him. I think he'll make a wonderful president," said Mark Spisto, 46, a psychologist who drove from Sterling, Mass., so his 14-year-old son, Jim, might see history in the making. "He's less polarizing. I hope he can bring the country together in a forward direction."

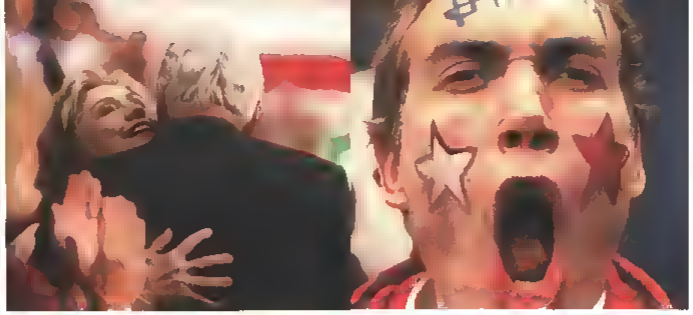
The overflow gym was full of mostly white people in their 20s and 30s, sitting cross-legged on the floor while listening to Obama's disembodied voice wafting over them like a call to prayer. Linda Pughano, 49, a nurse from Nashua and a registered independent, said she was won over by Obama when she heard his ground-breaking speech at the 2004 Democratic convention. "That was like watching history. I turned to my husband and said, 'Oh my. This guy is going to be next.'" Pughano said she's had enough of the Bush and Clinton dynasties. "They're not the Roosevelts," she huffed. And then she said what so many Obama supporters say: they want him to be the face of America. (It is left unsaid whether by that they mean a multi-ethnic face, a young face, an optimistic face, one open to dialogue and negotiation as Obama stresses he is—or all of the above.) "The country needs someone they can believe in, follow and respect," Pughano said. "Someone they can be proud of on the international stage."

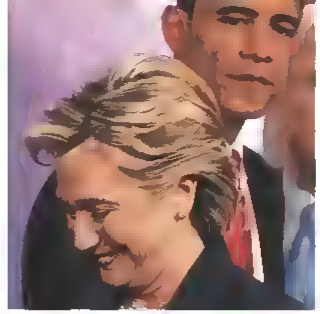
Elizabeth Libby, 43, a Nashua homemaker, said she was undecided. "Part of my reservation is that he is young and doesn't have a lot of experience. I'm hoping he'll change my mind." Before the end of the speech, she was squatting on the ground, filling out an Obama supporter card. After the candidates' debate later that night, she confirmed she'd be voting for him. Libby's daughter, Bailey, who will turn 18 in time to vote in November's presidential election, had reached that decision much earlier—she was an Obamaite from the beginning. "As cool as it would be to have a woman president, I'm not going to vote for her just because she's a woman," she said of Clinton. "I think that's a terrible reason to vote for someone."

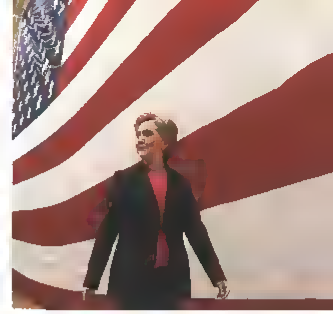
"Obama is like John Kennedy in the excitement he's raised," said undecided voter Paul Sandin, a 48-year-old robot designer from Brookline, less than 20 km west of Nashua. "My reservation is that in the general election, he won't get enough support because of his race. And I really don't want a Republican in the White House." But Sandin was worried that Clinton is too loathed by Republicans to get elected, or get anything done. "I don't see how she could bring the country together if half the country hates her. I don't think they hate Obama the way they hate Hillary." (Sandin would later vote for Obama.)

It took an hour for the crush of people to leave the Nashua parking lot, the candidate included. With his wife, Michelle, campaign













CLINTON CLAIMED THAT OBAMA WAS RAISING 'FALSE HOPES'

CLINTON PRESENTED HERSELF as the candidate of 'experience.' After Obama's initial surge, it was clear some voters bought into that

BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

ED REINKE/AP JIM BOURG/REUTERS ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

ing for him elsewhere in the state, and his two daughters, Malia and Sasha, being cared for by their maternal grandparents back home in Chicago—he called them every day and sometimes got a video hook-up—Obama waited inside his campaign bus, making calls to his supporters, hitting donors up for money, and watching football on the TV.

OBAMA WRAPPED UP every speech with a discourse on his campaign theme of "hope" and "change." It was something Clinton took aim at, after Obama's upset victory in the Iowa caucuses on Jan. 3 torpedoed her long time national front-runner status and damaged her presidential hopes. She seemed shocked, and with only five days between Iowa and New Hampshire, grasped for ways to shut Obama down.

At a Jan. 5 candidates' debate at a college in Manchester, Clinton turned on her main rival. In stark contrast to Obama's theme of "change," Clinton was running as the candidate of "experience." She had paid her dues for 35 years, learning the presidency through osmosis and backroom influence, and she was the candidate whose detailed policy positions left not one question unanswered, not one American uncovered by health insurance. And so she made her play: of course voters wanted "change," but who had the experience to bring it about? She did. And then it tumbled out. "We don't need to be raising the false hopes of our country about what can be delivered."

She used the line on the hustings, too. "We can't have false hopes," she said. "We've got to have a person who can walk into that Oval Office on day one and start doing the hard work that it takes to deliver change." Her words would haunt her, because elections *are* about raising hopes. That was a lesson Kim Campbell learned in 1993 when the then Progressive Conservative leader launched her federal election campaign with the prediction that Canada's then double digit unemployment rates wouldn't come down until the end of the century, while refusing to raise hopes by setting job creation targets. Campbell lost badly.

As seemed to be Clinton's fate, when polls showed Obama climbing into a solid lead. But her point seemed to have made some voters think twice. "I just feel she has more experience than Obama," said Ann Hagerstrom, 57, a special education assistant attending a Clinton rally. "I think he's a good speaker, but I don't think he has enough experience."

AT THE LEBANON RALLY, Obama pounces on Clinton's statements. "Oh, he's talking about hope again, he is no *naive*," he says self-mockingly. "His head is in the clouds. He's a hope monger." He flashes a wide grin. "We saw it two days ago in the debate," he says. "My opponent said, stop giving people false hopes about what we can accomplish." And then he moves in for the kill. "*False hopes?* There is no such thing. This country was built on hope. Is JFK looking up at the moon saying, 'Eh… too far. Reality check. Can't do it.' Is Dr. King standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial looking across that magnificent crowd, 'Sorry guys, false hope, the dream will die, it can't be done.' *False hope?* We don't need leaders to tell us what we can't do. We need those who can inspire us to do, say yes we can!"

By the end of that speech he is thundering about keeping the dream alive, fixing America, repairing the world—and the crowd is on its feet, shouting, clapping, hooting. Someone holds up a sign that says, "Hope. It's okay."

At this point, Elena Milius, the undecided student, is clapping enthusiastically. The next day, she will vote for Obama. "He talked about restoring America because it can't be divided anymore," she later explains. "He's talking about really waking people up, and he's getting people excited."

Clinton's New Hampshire appearances could not have been more different from Obama's. When she finally arrived, 2½ hours late, to a rally of about 1,000 in Hampton on Sunday, she took to the stage in a tangerine sweater and a black blazer. With daughter Chelsea in tow—her childhood curls replaced by long shiny blond waves—Clinton took a few jabs at Obama. "I think the debate was the defining moment of the election," she said. "It clarified that this is about the difference between rhetoric and reality. I also know that wishing doesn't make it so. There is a difference between hoping for change and demanding change." And change, she said, was about "the plans and goals you present that are rooted in your experiences."

Then she plunged into questions and answers for the rest of the evening, getting into the nitty-gritty details of politics ranging from health care to mortgages to renewable energy to reforming the United Nations. Asked if she was having fun, she rambled for a while before landing on her answer. "It's fun to be in a position to perhaps make history and pave the way for so many women and girls."

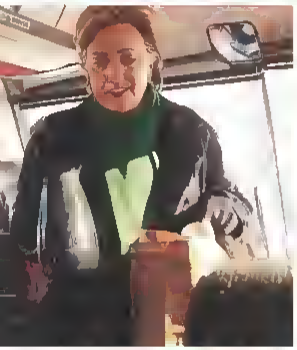
Her audience bought into the message. "I think she's got the experience we need right now," said Ann Hagerstrom's husband, John, 58, a market researcher and also a Clinton supporter. "I like Obama too, but I just think he's making his bid four or eight years too early." Sebastian Marcel, a 21-year-old student from the Université de Sherbrooke, drove five hours with a friend to hoist a "Quebec for Hillary" sign. "The guy at the border told me, 'You know you can't vote in the U.S.' I said, 'Yes, we know that, but we are interested—it has an influence on the whole world.' It's my first time seeing her. I'm so excited. It's one of the best days of my life."

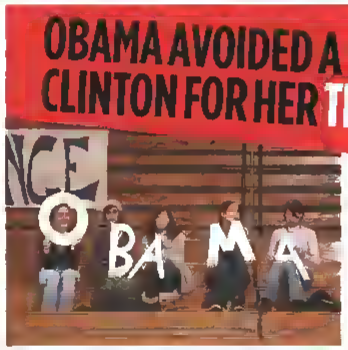
But Clinton was further turning up the heat, even targeting Obama's King and Kennedy analogies. "I would point to the fact that Dr. King's dream began to be realized when Pres-



Jack's coffee house in New London. Obama gets out for a meet-and-greet. There are more reporters than patrons at the establishment, all jostling for a spot within earshot. Obama orders a cookie at the counter. "Do you have oatmeal raisin?" he asked. *Oatmeal raisin* is repeated through the press throng and duly noted in several dozen notebooks. Obama pulls out his wallet and pays for the cookie and a tea with honey and lemon. Then he buys cookies and a box of cupcakes for the press corps, and starts pressing the flesh. Two blond preteen girls shriek when he turns to them, the way they might have, once upon a time, for Britney Spears. They are wearing basketball T-shirts, and he quizzes them on their teams, suggesting they talk to his personal aide, Reggie Love, who used to play for Duke University.

One reporter gives him the chance to kick Clinton, shouting out a question about her tears. Obama sidesteps. He didn't see the





OBAMA AVOIDED A CHANCE TO KICK CLINTON FOR HER TEARING UP EPISODE

OBAMA WITH HIS WIFE MICHELLE IN IOWA (top). 'We need leaders to say, yes we can'

JIM YOUNG/REUTERS. BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS. CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

dent Johnson passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, when he was able to get through Congress something that President Kennedy was hopeful to do," she told Fox News the night before the primary vote. Her point, ostensibly, was that it wasn't the inspiring pretty boy who got the real work done, although what came across in the media hubbub was that she was slighting King and Kennedy. Still, at least she was fighting—while Obama appeared determined to take the high road.

AFTER OBAMA'S campaign bus leaves Lebanon, the sun begins to turn the sky beyond the undulating mountains yellow. Reporters pass around laptops showing Web video of Clinton tearing up during a campaign stop. The Drudge Report headline screams, "Hillary gets emotional." On the Obama press bus, reporters debate whether the tears were manufactured to send the message that Clinton *has* emotions. Will they help her, or hurt her? (The next day, she will tell a CNN interviewer that "I actually have emotions. I know there are some people who doubt that." Her rival, John Edwards, will pounce on the opportunity and suggest that a weepy little girl might not be up for the job. "I think what we need in a commander-in-chief is strength and resolve, and presidential campaigns are tough business, but being president of the United States is also tough business," he tells reporters.)

Thirty-five kilometres out of Lebanon, Obama's campaign motorcade pulls over at

context, he says.

Then he reflects on what a "grind" the campaign is, and concludes that the incident is something he prefers not to comment on.

Back on the press bus, reporters grumble about the campaign crowds, the lack of space at the Lebanon event, the difficulty of getting a clear shot or audio. "New Hampshire is too small for Obama," says one, only half in jest. "He needs to go to Texas." The motorcade rumbles on. Still more campaigning before the next day's final stop: an election night party at a Nashua high school. Then on to fundraisers in New York, Boston, and more contests in Nevada, South Carolina and Florida, followed by Super Duper Tuesday on Feb. 5 in which more than 20 states will vote.

Other reporters struggle with writing about Obama's high-minded speeches. "Is hope an emotion?" asks one reporter. "I don't think so," says another. "It's an idea." One that has blown wide open a race that just a few months ago seemed locked up. M

THE ISSUE IN...

FLORIDA: BIG CHILL PUTS IGUANAS ON ICE

A cold snap that's seen temperatures around freezing has been especially hard on the state's population of iguanas. Officials in Cape Florida State Park report finding iguanas so cold that they've been falling out of trees onto bike paths. Once exposed to warming sunlight many of the cold-blooded lizards come back to life, although some perish. It's not terribly bad news to park officials who say the iguanas are an unwelcome invasive species.

SOME OF THE WORLD'S BEST WRITERS. IN ONE COLUMN.


ANDREW COYNE


PAUL WELLS


SCOTT FESCHUK


MARK STEYN


BARBARA AMIEL

BRINGING CONTEXT, INSIGHT AND CLARITY TO NEWS CLUTTER.

MACLEAN'S
MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL.



OPPOSITION supporters protest in the coastal city of Mombasa after disputed election returns

Why this sudden interest in Kenya?

Renowned novelist M.G. Vassanji writes about the country of his birth

KENYA HAS SUDDENLY grabbed the world's attention as perhaps never before in its 44-year history as an independent nation. The country's elections were widely discussed outside even before their taking place, as an exercise in democracy, a rare and much desired commodity in the world. The *New York Sunday Times* even devoted its precious magazine space to a lengthy discussion of the upcoming event. But when the nation had voted, the news was depressing and foreboded worse. Following announcement of the results, that the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki, had narrowly won the presidential election, protests and random violence had broken out in the streets, and the death toll soon rose to more than 300. It seemed very likely that the election had been stolen, for the results belied all the polls taken and there was clear evidence of rigging. A "million people" rally was called by the opposition party, ODU, led by Raila Odinga, who had run for president against Kibaki, but it was called illegal by the government. Protests and violence continued in the slums, peaceful protesters elsewhere were stopped on the streets by riot police firing tear gas. A news blackout seemed to be in place.

All this might have made headlines in sub-Saharan Africa, but why the upsurge of global concern? Perhaps the unusual attention this election garnered points to a growing concern about the world, that even remote corners now matter, troubles abroad can wash ashore anywhere else, even, God forbid, in North America and Europe. Perhaps we feel more connected now, especially since 9/11, the Asian tsunami, and hurricane Katrina, we speak about global warming, and terrorists seem to be everywhere, plotting our demise. Still, surely we are immune to worldwide violence, we take notice and move on to the next bit of news. It is the important violence that grabs headlines, such as the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, a country which after all has nuclear weapons.

Kenya by and large is known in the West as a tourist spot. Tourists land at Nairobi airport, put up overnight at a hotel, and early next morning, having donned their safari suits, take off in hired SUVs to the national parks. They don't rub shoulders with the populace, know or care little about the politics. There's no time, they are too ignorant. They get their dose of local culture, such as an organized African dance at their resort, and they return. Next time Tahiti. Why this sudden interest in Kenya, then? From Africa, after all, we are used to hearing about wars, hunger, disease. What else could be new there?

It makes us seethe with rage, those of us attached to the continent, to some part of it, to see it characterized as such, by war, hunger, and disease. It's as if that is the only story; as if people everywhere in Africa are either killing each other or dropping dead spontaneously. It's as if people don't laugh and cry, children don't go happily to school and play, young people don't fall in love and get married, no one sings.

And then, depressingly, every once in a while events happen that play perfectly to the stereotype. Such as this election's result and aftermath.

Kenya is a special case this time because it is a fairy tale gone awry. The bad witch threatens to steal little Democracy away. Paradoxically, we have also been told that the country has been one of Africa's most stable democracies. Some of us might suspect a public relations stunt behind such hyperbole. Or have enthusiasm and desperation been so great as to cause temporary amnesia? For the troubles in Kenya are simply a new twist to an old story. Admittedly there was some hope that the old story had ended. And so, perhaps, the hyperbole is justified: what's wrong with looking at the bright side, wishing it, *willing it*, to prevail? Who wants yet another mess in Africa, in the world? We have Darfur and Zimbabwe and Congo. And we've had Rwanda. That spectre haunts the world, casts a shadow over Kenya, with its own historical tribal grievances. But every country is different. In this case, some violence has been ethnic, true, but much of it is in the growing slums, where a cardboard box will suffice as your home, and armed thugs rule.



JOSEPH ORANGA/REUTERS
JACOB WIRE/CORBIS

IT MAY HELP TO SPIN a yarn about the longest-running democracy in Africa, a stable one to boot, but surely there is also history and context. Otherwise we are patronizing. Treating a nation like a child: say boo, and the wicked witch will run away. It is also not true that Kenyans have only now discovered democracy, only now are crying out for it. People have fought for it in the past, paid for it. It has been there always, but only as a dream. The last two presidents of the country ruled for almost 40 years. Both were involved in massive corruption and nepotism. According to reports, in the financial year 1995-96, approximately $10 billion of public money had gone missing. This in a country with an unemployment rate of 40 per cent. Still, ironically, Kenya was held up as a model African nation. This was because it had learned to exploit its special relationship with the West.

For long, ever since the days of colonialism, Kenya has been the darling of the West. It is where the white colonial settlements took place, and for some reason wherever white settlers have been are the places most developed, most written about. Dare one say, most cared about? Kenya is romanticized to this day. It is the wild country of public television's *Masterpiece Theatre*, where good English folk set themselves up against hardships, and European aristocratic black sheep indulged in their "white mischief." It was the hunting ground of princes and presidents. It is the nostalgia of Karen Blixen. Hollywood has enjoyed making films here, from *Mogambo* to *Out of Africa*. "Hakuna Matata," which would make the Swahili purist cringe, became the best known phrase of that language. Books about the white romance with Africa continue to sell hotly in Nairobi. Kenya's colonial heritage has therefore stood it well.

The present Kenya problem harkens back to how the colonial legacy was disposed of soon after independence. Jomo Kenyatta, the first president, jailed by a colonial kangaroo court for allegedly leading the Mau Mau, is believed by his critics to have made a deal with his colonial masters. That may be bitterness talking, from a real sense of betrayal felt by many Kenyans. All is forgiven, Kenyatta said at independence in 1963, let's start afresh. This was a generous, statesmanlike gesture, especially after a racist, near apartheid colonial rule and the bitter Mau Mau war. It soon became apparent however that a new pinstripe clad black elite had taken over from the whites. It was an elite that became immensely wealthy under Kenyatta. The lucrative farms of the former exclusive "white highlands"—which had been taken from the Kikuyu people during colonization and given to white settlers—were now redistributed in such a way that mostly wealthy individuals (including former settlers) and companies could buy them. The poor farmers received little, the former freedom fighters, demanding compensation, were called "bandits."

East Africans who are old enough remember a famous character from the 1960s dubbed Double-O. His name was Oginga Odinga and he was the father of Raila Odinga, the current leader of the ODU, now calling foul play and demanding a million-people march. While Kenyatta was in jail, Odinga with others had demanded his release before independence. Soon after independence, Odinga gave up his vice-presidency and became the opposition, he wrote a book titled *Not Yet Uhuru*, published in 1967, which charged Kenyatta's government of broken promises and more. Kenyatta called him a Communist and put him into detention. Kenya became a bulwark against Communism in the region. The American ambassador in Nairobi, William Attwood, even wrote a book analyzing the threat of Communism in the region, called *The Reds and the Blacks*. Years later, Attwood casually revealed in his memoirs how some of our president's men had been paid off. He gave names.

Kenya became a one-party state. Dissidents were put into detention at the infamous Kamiti prison, the most well known of them the novelist Ngugi wa Thiongo and the Swahili poet Abdelateef Abdalla. Ngugi's early novels are a savage indictment of Kenyatta's rule. Both writers finally went into exile, as did others. Meanwhile, students—as is their foolish wont—would hold periodic demonstrations and were put down by the dreaded GSU—a holdover from colonial times—and the university often closed. Assassinations became a convenient way of disposing of opponents. Thus Tom Mboya, J. M. Kariuki, Pio Gama Pinto, who had all fought for independence, but asked for a different governing style. During Moi's final years in office the Kenyan press finally discovered its guts and in the early 2000s, a full exposé of Kariuki's murder was published, implicating the former president's close bodyguard.



SAYYID AZIM/AP

OPPOSITION presidential candidate Raila Odinga (far left) addresses a crowd in Nairobi in October; President Mwai Kibaki and his wife, Lucy Kibaki, in Nairobi in November

IT MAKES US SEETHE WITH RAGE, THOSE OF US ATTACHED TO THE CONTINENT, TO SOME PART OF IT

And yet Kenya was the romance, development money poured in, tourists kept coming. In comparison to other African capitals, Nairobi, a beautiful Westernized city with a colonial legacy, worked, the city centre—if you looked past or through the ranks of the unemployed—burgeoned with new high rises. Shopping malls sprang up. As did security companies, because the former green valleys became covered with slums and violent crime rampaged.

The fight for independence was long and bitter. The struggle for democracy and social justice has been longer. The cry for these essential human rights sounds sharper and more desperate this time because they seemed so reachable. M

One of Canada's most celebrated novelists, M.G. Vassanji was born in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 1950 and raised in Tanzania. He came to Canada in 1978. He has twice won the Scotiabank Giller Prize, in 1994 for The Book of Secrets *and in 2003 for* The In Between World of Vikram Lall. *His latest novel is* The Assassin's Song, *which was shortlisted for the 2007 Giller.*



THE KUZNETSOV Dangerous manoeuvres among giant Norwegian oil platforms

A COLD WAR IN COLD WATERS

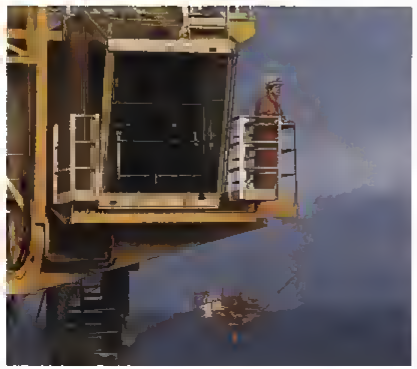
The stakes are raised as Russia threatens Norway's oil facilities

BY SEAN M. MALONEY • It isn't a mini-sub at the North Pole. It isn't a clutch of Tu-95 Bear bombers skirting the NORAD air defence system. This time it's the 66,600 tonne Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov and its 40 aircraft, escorted by two anti-submarine destroyers, a cruiser, and at least one nuclear attack submarine. And the target is Norway, one of Canada's NATO allies.

In mid-December, the Kuznetsov task group, operating in international waters, moved along the Norwegian coast, past the picturesque fjords on its way south to conduct what Russian spokesmen claimed are to be goodwill Mediterranean port visits and exercises, some including live missile launches. The announcement of this operation is in itself important, since Russian forces have operated in the Mediterranean in this fashion only once since the end of the Cold War—during the 1999 Kosovo air campaign when they were prepared to support Serbian air defence forces by providing early warning of NATO air operations launched from Italy. Now, with the building tension in Kosovo on whether to declare independence from Serbia, the deployment of the Kuznetsov is cause for concern.

But on Dec. 11, the Kuznetsov and her escorts suddenly stopped their advance—not somewhere remote in the high Arctic, but off the Norwegian port of Bergen, in the southern part of the country near the North Sea. The ships moved into the centre of the vast Gullfaks oil field, the home of over 40 large oil platforms, including the gargantuan Troll facility, and conducted provocative air operations. The Kuznetsov launched its Su-33 Flanker-D supersonic fighters, while a Tu-95 Bear bomber, presumably acting as the "enemy," approached and tried to get into missile range before it was "intercepted" and turned for its home base near Murmansk. The huge ship, meanwhile, even passed within a few kilometres of the Troll platform, which extracts

RUSSIA MAY SOON BE IN A POSITION TO COERCE EUROPE BY INTERFERING WITH OIL SUPPLIES



NORWEGIAN RIG: A mysterious spill occurred just as the Russians passed

REUTERS CP

a significant percentage of Gullfaks field oil.

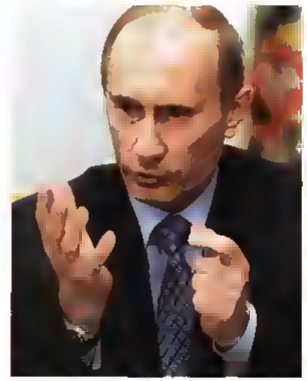
The danger associated with this activity in a crowded oil field cannot be underestimated. The accidental crash of a jet into an oil rig would be catastrophic, not only for the crew of the rig but for the environment, as oil would hemorrhage for days. In addition, each oil platform is serviced by a fleet of helicopters. Crews must be rotated, supplies must be brought in. When one Norwegian helicopter attempted a run, an Su-33 flew directly under it and accelerated, dangerously throwing the machine about in its jet wash. Russian Ka-27 Helix helicopters reportedly shadowed and harassed other helicopter resupply runs while the destroyers and the cruiser blocked surface shipping trying to approach the platforms. The Norwegian government suspended all of its air and surface movements to the Gullfaks field. In effect, the crews of nearly 40 oil rigs were held hostage for four days.

Norway underplayed the events. In Ottawa, Norwegian Embassy spokesman Joe Sletbak noted there was advance notice of an exercise, and that the actions of the Kuznetsov took place in international waters. Norwegian coast guard vessels, not naval ships, monitored the task group to avoid an incident. Other NATO allies are concerned that undue publicity would bolster President Vladimir Putin's domestic prestige, and are deliberately downplaying the implications.

There may be, as is often the case when dealing with the Russians, more to the events than meets the eye. Norway experienced its second worst oil spill ever on Dec. 11 at the Statfjord oil field—which the Kuznetsov passed on its way to Gullfaks. The official response is that the cause of the spill is unknown and under investigation. Still, in all probability, that accident wasn't a coincidence. Shutting down both the Gullfaks and Statfjord fields simultaneously, even for a short time, has substantial economic implications for Norway.

Why such tactics from the Russians? The answer may lie farther north in the Barents Sea, where Russia is sitting on the Shtokman field—"the world's largest offshore gas reserve," according to Bruce Jones, a senior policy adviser with the British Defence Ministry. In September, Putin announced a $20 billion investment by Russian energy giant Gazprom in Shtokman, with Norway's StatoilHydro company as a minority shareholder. But Statoil, which owns the Troll platform and most of the Gullfaks facilities harassed by the Kuznetsov, also has its own adjoining Barents Sea field, where, notes Jones, "there is a large, undeveloped, overlapping disputed area of roughly 15 per cent" of the combined area of both fields.

Could the recent provocation have been a shot across Norway's bow to resolve that dispute in Russia's favour, now that Norway has signed on to Shtokman? Russia has taken action in the past to coerce foreign oil companies, including Shell and Mitsubishi, into "modifying" deals as part of a campaign to re-nationalize energy holdings. Now it appears that the Russian navy is being used to further exert Russian pressure. If a stand is not made somewhere, Russia will be in a position in the near future to coerce Europe by interdicting its energy supplies. Moscow has already attempted this before, in the winter of 2004, when it threatened to shut off its natural gas pipeline to Poland. The timing of the Kuznetsov events is also not coincidental—it is again winter, when energy use is at its peak.



THE WEST kept quiet, because publicity would only increase Putin's domestic stature

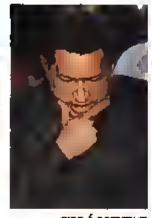
DMITRY ASTAKHOV/AP REUTERS GETTY

The deployment of the Kuznetsov isn't mere "muscle flexing," as uninformed critics lazily label any Russian military activity since the end of the Cold War. It is part of a carefully calculated strategy of peripheral destabilization and the incremental return of Russian global power—at Europe's expense. The Russian chess masters are now far beyond throwing away pawns during the opening moves in a game the West is so far refusing to play. As one experienced Russia analyst notes, "They've now moved a rook. Start to worry about what the endgame is going to look like." M

Bungle in the jungle: still no freed hostages

BY ISABEL VINCENT • Angered over the recent hostage debacle in his own country, Colombian President Álvaro Uribe said this week that his government will not accept any more international overtures to free a group of hostages held by guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Uribe was referring to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's recent failed mission to secure the release of three high-profile hostages. Chavez, who had personally negotiated with the upper echelons of the FARC, had told the world that the guerrillas promised to release Clara Rojas, a political aide kidnapped along with presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt in 2002, Rojas's three-year-old son Emmanuel, born in captivity, and former Colombian congresswoman Consuelo González, and he planned to turn the hand over into a global media event.

Chávez had two Red Cross helicopters on call to fly to a designated meeting point in the Colombian jungle and had invited former Argentine president Nestor Kirchener and filmmaker Oliver Stone to the extravaganza. However, when the FARC reneged, Chavez's credibility suffered a huge blow. The guerrillas didn't look much better, especially as it became clear why they had no intention of releasing Emmanuel. A FARC member took the sickly infant to a country hospital for treatment in 2005 and pretended the boy was a relative. According to a *Miami Herald* report, the FARC member never told his superiors that Emmanuel had been placed in foster care.



CHÁVEZ'S hostage mess strengthened Uribe's hand

Uribe, who has emerged much stronger as a result of the Chávez hostage mess, last week was able to confirm through DNA tests that the child was indeed Emmanuel. As a result of the guerrillas' duplicity, Uribe has promised a much harder line in future negotiations to release some of the 750 hostages currently under their control. And he wants everyone to stay out. Whether that applies to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who has made the release of French-Colombian hostage Betancourt a cornerstone of his foreign policy, remains to be seen. M

Getting the lead out of executions

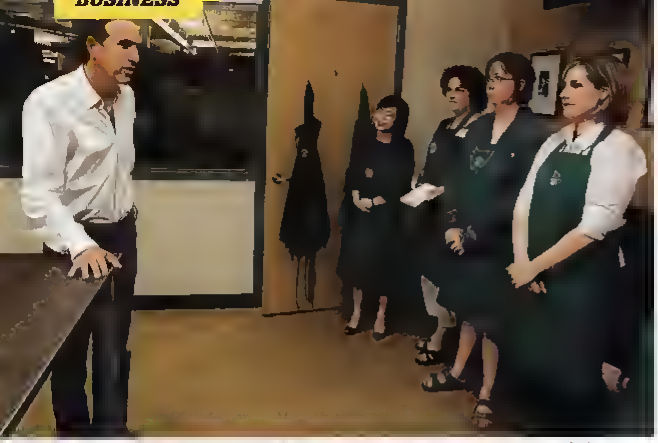
BY PATRICIA TREBLE • In China, where 68 offences ranging from pornography distribution to tax fraud are capital crimes, executions are usually public spectacles as the condemned are lined up and killed by a bullet in the back of the head. Families are billed the equivalent of 60 cents for the ammuni-



PARADING THE CONDEMNED: the lethal-injection vans are coming

tion. Although execution statistics are a state secret, experts believe that up to 10,000 prisoners are killed annually. Now, under international pressure in the run-up to the Beijing Summer Olympics to improve China's corrupt and abusive judicial system, Jiang Xingchang, vice-president of the Supreme People's Court, announced last week that his nation was updating its killing method, replacing bullets with lethal injections. "It is considered more humane and will be used in all intermediate people's courts," he said.

Though lethal injections were first introduced in 1997, they have so far been thought to account for only a minority of China's executions, though the numbers have been increasing as specially equipped "death vans" outfitted to perform lethal injections tour the country. (Prisoners' organs are extracted after death for transplants, many to foreigners, according to human rights experts.) China uses a three-drug mixture similar to the process used in the U.S. But that technique is under attack in America, where a Kentucky case involving the triple-cocktail method—which sedates, paralyzes and then kills the condemned—is before the Supreme Court. There is no legal debate about executions in China: the country's chief justice, Xiao Yang, recently said that the nation believes in "an eye for an eye and a life for a life." With lethal injections about to phase out executions, there are reports that families won't be billed for the deadly chemicals. M



FOUNDER Howard Schultz is returning as CEO in hopes of restoring the brand's lustre

GRANDE TROUBLE AT STARBUCKS

The coffee giant's step down-market has taken a turn for the worse

BY JASON KIBBY • London, Ky., shares little in common with its cosmopolitan name sake. With a population of just 7,800, the town is perhaps best known (to those who know it at all) for its annual chicken festival. Colonel Sanders himself fried his first fowl nearby. But in the next month or so, when the doors open on a new Starbucks coffee shop, Londoners will be able to partake in that rite of passage of modern urban life—forking over $5 for a coffee that takes five minutes to order.

If Starbucks was once the sole domain of coffee connoisseurs and over-caffeinated yuppies, that's no longer the case. For every new store in Chicago and Toronto, there are many more opening in places like Brantford, Ont., Lusby, Md., and Walla Walla, Wash. In just the last four years, that strategy has enabled Starbucks to more than double the number of stores it has in the U.S. to about 10,700. It's also why the company is now in so much trouble. Having traded highbrow exclusivity for down-market dollars, Starbucks has found its diluted customer base isn't nearly as loyal as it used to be.

In November, Starbucks stunned shareholders with news that traffic at its U.S. stores fell for the first time ever. The slip was just one per cent, but for a company that had known nothing but constant, staggering growth, it was earth shaking news. By Monday the company's market value was worth half what it was a year ago. It was the last straw for the company's board. When founder and Chairman Howard Schultz reclaimed the job of CEO this week, after 7½ years away from the helm, he did so with a plan to scale back his predecessor Jim Donald's wildly ambitious plans to open another 1,600 stores in the U.S. this year. Schultz said he will shut down struggling locations, streamline bureaucracy and "re-ignite" the emotional attachment customers have to the brand. A tall order indeed. But his success is by no means guaranteed, especially as America faces the prospect of a painful recession.



ANALYSTS USED TO CALL STARBUCKS 'RECESSION-PROOF.' NOT ANYMORE.

But wait. Wasn't Starbucks supposed to be immune to economic ups and downs? That was always the investor argument made in favour of owning the company's shares, and it was borne out during the U.S. recession that followed the dot-com collapse and 9/11. While most restaurants and retailers felt the squeeze as consumers scaled back, Starbucks' latte-sipping well-to-dos kept coming back for more. That's because, typically, luxury brands attract premium customers who are less sensitive to economic swings. They've got better job security and more disposable income to ride out the lows. When Starbucks continued to rack up impressive gains through 2002 and 2003, analysts went so far as to label the company "recession-proof."

So much for that. The past few years have seen a complete overhaul of the Starbucks strategy and customer focus. In its constant quest for hyper-growth, the company streamlined and automated much of the artistry once associated with its specialty drinks. The notion of Starbucks as a relaxing "third place" for its customers, somewhere away from home and work, has given way to drive-through windows and stores plunked down near interstate off-ramps—such as the one in London, Ky. In fact, coffee is getting squeezed on the menu by greasy breakfast sandwiches and music CDs (last year Starbucks even formed a record label and signed Paul McCartney as its first artist).

Along the way, two things have happened. With nearly seven new Starbucks opening every day worldwide, there's been a serious strain on employee training, and the customer service that allowed the coffee house to charge premium prices for its drinks suffered noticeably. Suddenly, the Starbucks baristas didn't seem so special, and many cherished coffee mavens turned elsewhere for their caffeine fix. In his recent book *Starbucked: A Double Tall Tale of Caffeine, Commerce, and Culture*, author Taylor Clark points out that between 2000 and 2005, the number of mom-and-pop coffee shops in the U.S. jumped 40 per cent to 14,000—no doubt drawing on the cortege of Starbucks refugees.

At the same time, Starbucks has attracted a whole new type of patron, one drawn by the novelty of the high-end coffee experience, but lacking the deep pockets of the previous crowd. With the collapse of the U.S. housing market and the looming threat of layoffs, many of those lower- and middle-income Americans are tightening their purse strings. Not surprisingly, caramel macchiatos are among the first luxuries to go when times get a little tougher. As analysts at Bear Stearns put it in a report to clients last week: "We attribute this new cyclical sensitivity to the success the company has had in past years broadening its customer base to include more blue-collar, less-affluent consumers who are more likely to react to economic pressures by scaling back visit frequency."

This all puts Starbucks and Schwartz in a bitter position going forward. McDonald's and Dunkin' Donuts, having lost some of their own customers to Starbucks, have fought back with lattes and cappuccinos that come with more reasonable price tags. The question for Starbucks is whether it can avoid being dragged into a price war over the bargain beverage crowd, especially if the economy really hits the skids.

To its credit, Starbucks has taken steps to reduce its reliance on the North American consumer. The company's existing plan for this year calls for it to open 900 new stores in international markets, in particular China, Russia and Latin America. Schwartz now says he intends to accelerate growth outside the U.S. even more. But analysts say no matter how successful the company is overseas, if it doesn't get its domestic operations in order, it won't make much difference. "Before doing anything else, they have to address this saturation issue in the mature markets," says Robert Toomey, an analyst with E.K. Riley Investments in Seattle.

None of this should come as much of a surprise to Starbucks watchers. The company itself has been well aware of the problem for some time now. It's been almost a year since Schultz sent a blunt message to executives warning that the rush to grow had resulted in the "watering down of the Starbucks experience, and what some might call the commoditization of our brand." Investors were no doubt happy to see Schultz step back into the picture and take the reins, much as Michael Dell, another iconic company founder, returned to the CEO's office at Dell Computer. At the very least it gives investors more confidence that Starbucks will soon return to its roots catering to the well-heeled over the steel-toed set.

Better that, they say, than relying on new stores in towns like London, Ky., for growth. After all, as any Londoner can tell you, 12 KFC chicken wings can be had for roughly the same price as a peppermint mocha. M

TED S. WARREN/AP; CHRIS SMITH/THE BRANTFORD EXPOSITOR

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WWW.TORONTOHABITAT.CA

The bright side of the boomer bust

A rush of retirees could be sweet salvation for non-profit groups

BY JOSDAN TIMM • As the baby boom generation inches closer to its white-pants-and-shuffleboard years, the anticipated talent crunch—the sudden lack of skilled and experienced workers in the workplace that will result from that generation's retirement—seems ever more imposing. It gets fretted about at the largest Bay Street firm, and in the smallest mom-and-pop operation.

But the exodus of experienced talent from the private sector could be a boon for Canada's not-for-profits and charities. More and more boomers, for whom earning potential is no longer a top priority, are looking for a way to give back. "As the boomers are retiring, they're not necessarily going out on the golf course," says Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz, CEO of Imagine Canada, a research and advocacy group for Canadian non-profits. "They're going off to do things in a volunteer way, or some of them are in fact taking jobs in the not-for-profit sector."



AROUND age 50, people start looking for ways to give back

Imagine Canada has just released a new study that highlights the challenge non-profit organizations can face in staffing. "It's really the whole aspect of human capital," Steinsky-Schwartz says. "That includes not only paid staff, but also volunteers and members of boards of directors." Imagine Canada canvassed the opinions of 32 leaders across the non-profit sector, in fields like the arts, the environment and health, and found increasing concern. According to the study, the sector—comprising about 11 per cent of Canada's workforce—faces particular difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified, experienced staff who are motivated, skilled, and gifted with business acumen. What's more, the leaders surveyed expect huge turnover at the top of their organizations, and are worried about the readiness of younger workers in their 20s and 30s to fill those senior roles.

But older workers who are "re-careering" into the non-profit sector might be a buffer against an awkward generational transition for this country's charities. Imagine Canada's research found many non-profits already have retiring boomers in their crosshairs as they look for new sources of senior staff. As one anonymous respondent said, "We should target junior seniors (late 50s) from the for-profit sector who would like to do something more meaningful with their lives." According to Toronto writer and consultant Julia Moulden's new book, *We are the New Radicals: A Manifesto for Reinventing Yourself and Saving the World*—which explores the phenomenon of re-careering into pursuits closer to the heart than earning the biggest paycheque possible—50 seems to be the magic age at which people are making the leap. "Perhaps the saying 'don't trust anyone over 30' has evolved into the boomer-friendly 'your new life begins at 50,'" she writes.

So "junior seniors" might help bridge the gap between the non-profit sector's retiring leader class and its younger recruits. Steinsky-Schwartz is herself an example of someone who made the switch, having previously worked for Bell Canada and as a federal deputy minister, among other roles. "It's a shift in values," she says, "and a lot of my peers although I personally don't like the term, talk about giving back." Their willingness to work in the non-profit sector may be even more valuable than a willingness to open their chequebooks to it. As one respondent to the Imagine Canada survey puts it, "The scarcest resource in the sector is leadership, not donations." M

SSHH: MEN AT WORK

Intel's Quiet Time pilot bans phone calls, visits, and email in the office

BY KATE LUNAU • When Sir Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravity, he wasn't fiddling with a BlackBerry, he was reclined against an apple tree in quiet contemplation, or so the story goes. For today's scientist, as for any office worker, with colleagues, endless meetings and an overflowing inbox, such uninterrupted moments are rare. What does the lost time mean for creative thought? Computer giant Intel is studying this question in a six-month pilot project dubbed "Quiet Time," workers shut out all distractions and wait for the proverbial apple to fall.

Quiet Time, which began in September, happens each Tuesday at two of Intel's U.S. sites (they won't reveal exactly where). From 8 a.m. to noon, the 300 engineers and managers in the test group set email and instant messaging to off-line mode, forward all calls to voice mail, and hang "do not disturb" signs at their cubicle entrances. They're then free to do "thinking work," says Intel IT principal engineer Nathan Zeldes, the man behind the project. "These guys are designing products, so I would hope they'd devote it to that," he says. "Although I'm sure some of them are tempted to clean out their inboxes."

No doubt they are. Information overload was a main concern behind the implementation of Quiet Time. "Today's rapid flow and exchange of information, and the consequent tasks they impose, are overwhelming," notes a report co-authored by Zeldes. "The barrage of communication exacts a toll on [workers'] productivity, as well as on their personal well-being." It also costs a typical knowledge-intensive company of 50,000 employees an estimated US$1 billion each year, the report says. Intel employees receive about 350 emails a week (a third of which they deem unnecessary), and spend 20 hours managing them. They're not the only ones suffering. Around the world, roughly 196 billion emails were sent and received daily in 2007—up from 5.1 billion in 2001. A recent study from the Universities of Glasgow and Paisley found that office workers check their email up to 40 times an hour, which is why a number of businesses—including Intel—are already experimenting with "No Email Day" initiatives.

Quiet Time-style initiatives go further

Today's knowledge workers can expect just three minutes of uninterrupted work on any given task, suggests research from Gloria Mark and Victor M. González at the University of California, Irvine. "It's bad for innovation," Mark says. "To be able to think very deeply, you do need quiet time." That's the idea behind "Administration Free Thursday," observed by 30 researchers at the University of Cambridge's Centre for Quantum Computation for the past three years. AFT, as it's called, "means no grant proposals, no fellowship applications, no reports, no booking of speakers or claiming of expenses. We just do physics," the project website explains.

Not only does constant interruption cause anxiety and fatigue—the Scottish study found 34 per cent of workers felt stressed by the sheer number of emails they received—it can sap creativity. One Harvard University report concluded that most people are 45 per cent less likely to think creatively on high-pressure days. "When creativity is under the gun, it usually gets killed," the study says. Information overload is literally driving some to distraction. Office workers increasingly show signs of "culturally induced attention deficit disorder," says Dr. Edward Hallowell, an ADD expert. "When you get overloaded, you become restless, distracted, irritable," he explains. But unlike true ADD, this is environmentally dependent. "If you sent these people to a quiet farm in Vermont, the symptoms would disappear." Hallowell has coined a term for this workplace affliction—attention deficit trait.

NEWTON had time for contemplation. Most workers don't

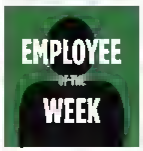


TODAY'S WORKERS ARE IRRITABLE, DISTRACTED: SIGNS OF A 'CULTURAL ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER'

Although Quiet Time's subjects are temporarily cut off from email and other distractions, Intel can't stop them from interrupting themselves. Mark notes only about half of all workplace interruptions are external—the rest of the time, people break off from what they're doing for no ostensible reason. "There's a restlessness that wasn't there in Newton's day," says Zeldes.

Maybe that's one reason Quiet Time hasn't been unanimously popular, though Zeldes says "the ones who like it outnumber the ones who don't." He hopes its lessons can eventually be implemented company-wide—and has fielded questions on his research from everyone from the U.S. Army to the Salvation Army. "We're still learning how to manage technology," says Hallowell. "At first, it was managing us."

Zeldes himself doesn't observe an official Quiet Time. But he has one advantage over his co-workers, the time difference. "I work for a U.S. organization," he points out. His Jerusalem home is at least seven hours ahead of most North American time zones. For at least some of his workday, then, "the people who might bug me are fast asleep." M



A LOST CHEQUE AND ONE HONEST MAN

Ha works at McDonald's and is so poor that ha usas food stamps a welfare supplement. When Reggia Damone of Connecticut chanced on a placa of sidewalk litter last waak, ha intended to usa the papar to write a ramindar nota. What ha found was a chaqua for US$185,000. Instaad of attampting to cash it, Damona, 47, took the cheque back to the bank holding tha account. Ha was rewardad for his honesty by the cheque's payee with US$50.

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In the grips of Nigeria's oil-fuelled chaos



ARMED GANGS heve turned to kidnapping and murder

BY STEVE MAICH • As the price of oil crested above US$100 a barrel last week, North American drivers got a rude introduction to yet another global hotspot heightening the financial pain at the pumps

It was a day of bloody carnage in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, that prompted jittery oil traders to cross the triple-digit barrier for the first time ever. At least 13 people were killed, including four police officers, in a string of attacks around the oil capital of the Niger Delta region, and analysts fear that this escalating violence could further curtail exports from the world's 12th-biggest oil producer.

Violence and danger is nothing new to those who've spent the past several years dodging abduction attempts and sporadic gunfights between government troops, private security mercenaries and local militias in and around the Niger Delta. Analysts estimate that the unrest has cut as much as 20 per cent from the region's daily energy production over the past few years.

One group, the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), has been fighting an insurrection to win a greater share of oil wealth for the region's desperately poor population. The group has abducted dozens of foreign oil workers over the past few years, releasing most unharmed. But responsibility for the latest attacks was claimed by the Niger Delta Vigilante Movement, one of several armed gangs that have turned the kidnapping of foreign workers for ransom into a booming and lucrative business.

Most analysts expect that oil prices should ease in the coming year, especially since North American fuel inventories continue to rise. But with traders driving prices up at the first sign of trouble in oil producing regions, and with tensions in the Middle East and North Africa still riding high, most are now projecting spikes in Canadian gasoline prices, to $1.30 per litre or even higher, this winter. M

Big Pharma's $57-billion sales pitch

BY KATE KENNEDY • U.S. pharmaceutical companies spend nearly twice as much on promoting and marketing drugs as they do on research and development, according to a new study by Canadian researchers.

The industry spent US$57.5 billion on promotion in 2004 compared to US$31.5 billion on the development of new medications, says Dr. Marc-Andre Gagnon of the University of Quebec and co-author of the study, published Jan. 3 in the journal *Public Library of Science Medicine*. The result is that the market is flooded each year with "me-too" drugs, treatments that have little or no new therapeutic value but are very similar to what's already being sold, Gagnon says. That might maximize profits for companies trying to grab a larger slice of an existing market, but it does little to improve the health of patients. "The critical mass of new drugs is junk," he says.

To put the costs in perspective, consider that for every dollar spent on prescription drugs in the U.S., 25 cents goes to promotion and nearly all of that is directed toward doctors in the form of visits from sales reps, free samples, and ads in medical journals. And there's a fair amount of evidence to suggest that the more doctors heed those ads, the more their judgment is affected when it comes to writing prescriptions, says Joel Lexchin of York University and co-author of the study. "What that translates into for consumers is that advertising is bad for your health," Lexchin says.



CRITICS WORRY that marketing overwhelms research efforts

The researchers based their study on the U.S. industry because there is no public authority that collects data on promotional spending in Canada. But Gagnon says the landscape is probably roughly similar to that in the U.S. About $1.2 billion was spent on research and development in Canada in 2004, and he estimates promotional costs that year were roughly $2.8 billion.

The question for consumers is whether their prescriptions are being driven by solid test results or robust promotion, Gagnon says. As long as Big Pharma is selling as aggressively as it's researching, it'll be up to patients to ask their doctors tough questions. M

So long to the browser that started it all

BY COLIN CAMPBELL • Back in the days of the floppy disk drive and dial-up Internet, the king of all computer software was a Web browser called Netscape Navigator. By the late 1990s, with a market share of over 80 per cent, it was the go-to tool for just about anyone logging on to the nascent Internet. But after a decade-long slide, its end is finally on the horizon. AOL, which bought Netscape in 1998 for $4.2 billion, said it will scrap the iconic Navigator for good on Feb. 1.

It's easy to forget just how much promise investors once saw in Netscape. In fact, it may come as a surprise that the pioneering browser has survived this long at all—it was supplanted years ago by Microsoft's Internet Explorer and the open-source Web browser, Firefox. But when the company went public in August 1995, its early growth was explosive. Netscape's stock went from US$28 a share to a high of US$78 in the first day alone. If the Internet was the next big thing, then Netscape was going to be the key to its success.



NETSCAPE Navigetor lost its huge lead in the market

"In 1996 we thought the operating system for the Internet was the browser. That's why Netscape was the biggest thing in the world," says Duncan Stewart, a tech analyst and CEO of Duncan Stewart Asset Management. "The reason it's gone now isn't because they became a bad browser or were beat up on, it's because we were wrong." Netscape, says Stewart, was never able to make significant money from the Web browser, which remains a humble, not to mention free, piece of software (unlike costly computer operating systems like Windows). Netscape's demise was hurried along by Microsoft, which blanketed the PC world with its popular Explorer software, but analysts say it was likely doomed regardless. Web search sites like Google and Web portals like Yahoo! have emerged as the real online money-makers.

The name Netscape will live on. AOL said it plans no more updated versions, but it will keep Navigator alive as "a general use Internet portal." In other words, it's become a lonely piece of Internet jetsam from what was once a groundbreaking company. M

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HOW TO FIX BOYS

Let them start school later and, yes, let them fight and play with toy guns. KATE FILLION talks with child development expert Leonard Sax.

A dozen years ago, the hue and cry was about girls: girls were "silenced" at school, girls were tragic mini-Ophelias, in need of reviving. As it turned out, whatever other problems girls had, being "silenced" and "disadvantaged at school" were decidedly not among them. In fact, on most academic measures, girls outperform boys.

Hence the new buzz: there's a crisis among boys. Like many proponents of this viewpoint, Leonard Sax argues that boys are less resilient and more prone to school failure than ever before. Sax, a family physician and research psychologist in Maryland, believes a combination of social and biological factors has created a toxic environment for boys. The result, he argues in Boys Adrift, *is a generation of slackers and underachievers, so lacking in motivation that they barely notice, much less care about, their own failure to launch. Sax, who has been visiting schools in Ontario this week to speak to parents and faculty about gender differences in learning, spoke to* Maclean's *about the trouble with boys.*

Q: *So how do we know for sure there really is a problem with boys?*

A: You can certainly go to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and find people who will vigorously contest the assertion that there's any problem at all with boys. But there are fewer boys who care about school at all, and a smaller proportion of men going on to postgraduate work. A helpful question to ask is, "What hard data do we have?" Almost exactly 50 per cent of applicants to Canadian medical schools are women, but nationally, 58 per cent of students actually attending medical school are women. Why is that? Well, because Canadian medical schools generally admit people without regard to gender, which is not the case in the U.S., and women have better grades and test scores at university than the men have, so they're better qualified. Likewise, about 60 per cent of undergraduates are women. This is a stunning reversal, according not to me but to a Statistics Canada report published in September.

Q: *Why has this happened?*

A: Their explanation doesn't dig very deep, but I think it's accurate. They say it can be explained on the basis of characteristics that are apparent much earlier in education. Kids who care about getting good grades in secondary school are much more likely to go on to university, and girls are much more likely to care about grades than boys are.

Q: *But why do girls care more?*

A: It's linked to a profound change in the way we educate kids, beginning in kindergarten, with an acceleration of the early elementary curriculum. Thirty years ago, if you walked into just about any kindergarten in North America, you would've seen kids doing lots of different activities: singing, playing, dancing, fingerpainting. There was some didactic education, but it was a very small part of the day. Today, in just about any kindergarten, public or private, the primary activity is formal didactic education, with the kids sitting still and the teacher instructing. It's all about learning to read and write. That acceleration of the curriculum took place without any awareness of the hard-wired sex differences in the trajectories of brain development. People had no understanding of this because it only became known in the past five years.

Q: *What are the differences, exactly?*

A: The largest study of brain development of children, conducted by the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md., and published just a few months ago, shows very dramatically that the brain of the five-year-old boy—in terms of maturity, particularly in the language area—is at about the same place as the brain of a 3½-year-old girl. If you talk to the folks at OISE they will say, "Oh, there's lots of variation and lots of overlap between the sexes," and that's true on some parameters, but not this one. There's no overlap. Twenty years ago there was the idea that adult men and women were gendered, but six-year-olds were very much neuter. It's an old idea that goes back at least to Freud, who wrote of what he called the latency period; he thought that from about age five to the onset of puberty, gender didn't matter. It turns out the reality is just the opposite. The six-year-old boy and the six-year-old girl differ from each other much more than an adult man and adult woman do. We all wind up in the same place: there's very little difference in terms of adult men's and women's maturity, ability to sit still, how they learn. But there are huge differences in the ability of the average six-year-old girl and boy to sit still and be quiet.

Q: *And you say this plays out quite dramatically in kindergarten, where it first becomes evident that girls have a significant academic advantage.*

A: Walk into a kindergarten—I've visited more than 200 schools around North America over the past seven years—and you hear the teacher saying, "Jared, honey, why are you standing? Please sit down. Damian, are you making a buzzing noise? Please stop that. Look at Kate, she's sitting still and being quiet and being good. Can't you boys just sit still and be quiet?" The teacher doesn't mean to send this message, but she is: pleasing the teacher is something the girls do. The boys develop a notion, which they would not have developed in a kindergarten 30 years ago, that doing what the teacher wants and being good is un-masculine. That's their first impression of school. And research shows that these attitudes, that kids form very early, are very stable: once a boy decides that school is stupid and the teacher hates him and trying to please the teacher is something girls do, four years later he still has the same beliefs. They're set, like concrete.

Q: *So when do you think boys should start kindergarten, if the focus remains on learning to read and write?*

A: Seven years ago I wrote an article for the American Psychological Association saying the default age of entry should be five for girls, six for boys. That created quite a stir. I have since abandoned that assertion, though I still think it's a good idea, because parents generally don't understand it. They say, "Oh, you think my son's dumb?"

Q: *Obviously there's going to be individual variation. How many boys are ready at age five to start kindergarten?*

A: On the order of 12 per cent, 88 per cent would do better if they started at age six. The key to success in early elementary education is doing the right thing at the right time. Farmers understand this. You can have the best farmland in the world and the best feed corn in the world, but if you try to plant your crop in the middle of a January snowstorm, you will not be successful. Likewise, you may have a very bright boy, but if you're asking him to do things that are not developmentally appropriate, he won't be successful. And the danger is that he will develop negative attitudes toward school, and it will be very difficult to change them.

Q: *You're a strong advocate for single sex public education. You say boys are more successful in single sex classrooms, but how do you quantify that?*

A: In the U.S., you find that boys in all-boy classrooms get much better test scores in second or fourth grade than boys in coed classrooms do. I'll give you one example. At Woodward Avenue Elementary School in DeLand, Fla., they essentially randomly assigned kids to coed or single sex classrooms, then adjusted for socio-economic variables, to make sure they didn't have all the low-income kids in one class and the high-income kids in another. On the standardized state test, 37 per cent of the boys in coed classrooms scored proficient, compared to 59 per cent of the girls, in the all-girls classrooms, 75 per cent scored proficient, and in the all-boys classroom, 86 per cent scored proficient. Same class size, same demographics, same teachers, same curriculum, but the boys in single sex classes did tremendously better than their peers in coed classrooms. I want to stress that simply putting boys in one room and girls in another accomplishes nothing. If the teacher is still saying, "Justin, sit down and be quiet!" you will accomplish nothing. But if the teachers have had the appropriate training, they understand, okay, sitting is optional—you should never ask a five-year-old, especially not a boy, to sit down and stay quiet. Many find that very difficult, and it's not essential to learning. On the contrary, for many boys, the best classroom is one where they're jumping up and down.

Q: *Who's more resistant to the idea of sitting at a desk being optional: teachers or parents?*

A: Teachers are very resistant until they see the results we've achieved at schools that adopt this format. They say, "Look, I've had 20 years of experience, and kids have to sit still and be quiet, otherwise it's very distracting." That's generally true—for girls. For example, C. Elliott, who was a researcher in Toronto about 30 years ago, was the first to look at sex differences in the effect of extraneous noise, such as tapping or buzzing. He found that girls and women were bothered at sound levels 10 to 40 times lower than

LEONARD SAX: Zero-tolerance policies only hurt boys



'ABOUT 12 PER CENT OF BOYS ARE READY FOR SCHOOL AT AGE FIVE. 88 PER CENT WOULD DO BETTER IF THEY STARTED AT 6.'

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF HUTCHENS/GETTY IMAGES

VIRGO PRODUCTIONS/CORBIS

would bother boys and young men So if you say kids can tap their pencils as much as they want, Melissa is going to say, "But that really distracts me, it's annoying." But ask Matthew if he's bothered by the noise, and he'll say, "What noise?" Girls are aware of what's going on around them, but boys are oblivious One reason is hard-wired differences in the auditory system itself

Q: *What about the argument that it's a coed world, so dividing kids by gender doesn't prepare them for it?*

A. The fact is, the coed school does not reflect the real world It's a very peculiar environment where what really counts is who's cute, who likes whom, and who's wearing nice clothes The focus is relentlessly on how you look and who likes you, which is very different from the real world An interesting study conducted by two American researchers looked at a cohort of girls, all from the same neighbourhood in Belfast who'd been randomly assigned to single sex or coed schools For those at coed schools, you only needed to ask one question to know a girl's self-esteem "Are you pretty?" If a girl was pretty, her self-esteem was very high, even if she had terrible grades or was bad at sports At a coed school, if you're pretty, you're royalty everyone's fascinated by you, it doesn't matter if you're flunking all your classes The dark side of that is that if you walk down the hall and some boy says, "There goes the whale' Her face looks like a pizza," it lowers your status in front of the other girls, even if you loathe and detest that boy At coed schools, it doesn't matter if you're a straight A student or good at sports, only being pretty matters At girls' schools, the researchers found this was not the case Self esteem was a complex product of many factors grades, getting along with parents, being good at sports, and yes, being pretty, but that wasn't even in the top three I think single sex education may in fact be much better preparation for the real world than the coed school is

Q: *Is there any kind of boy who won't do well in a single sex school? It's hard to imagine an effeminate boy thriving*

A. There's some very interesting research conducted by a team at the University of Washington, every one of whom was vehemently opposed to single sex education They studied an all-boys Catholic school as it underwent a transition to a coed school, which they thought was a wonderful thing, because the school got much more quiet and orderly But they did find one group of boys who were disadvantaged the scholars, the geeks When the school was all boys, the geeks had a certain niche in the popularity rankings, about halfway up The two main determinants of popularity for boys across North America are athletic prowess and sense of humour, the most popular boy is generally going to be the skilled athlete who's very relaxed and can make people laugh. Those boys do great in any setting. The scholar, the geek, he does okay at the boys' school, he helps people with their physics homework, but when the school in this study went through the transition to coed, those boys lost their status. They were the ones who really suffered and became withdrawn and depressed, loners. I'm not saying that every all boys school is a haven for boys. They're not I always tell parents that a good coed school is a much better choice than a bad boys' school.

Q. *How can you tell whether a boys' school is any good?*

A: Go in during lunchtime. If the teachers are sitting with the boys, that's a very good sign. Do the boys look up to the teachers, respect them, is there a sense of order? If there is not, you get a *Lord of the Flies* situation very quickly, where the strong prey on the weak

Q: *A lot of schools ban any kind of pretend gun play, sword fighting and so on. Is this bad for boys?*

A: Policies which ban children from playing with pretend swords or toy guns are not grounded in any research findings demonstrating that those policies accomplish anything good. Prohibiting children from playing with toy swords or guns does not decrease the likelihood of any bad outcome, indeed it accomplishes no useful end. The school could have taken the opportunity to build imaginative play around concepts like teamwork and heroism. Instead, schools too often simply endorse traditional girls' activities while condemning traditional boys' activities.

Q: *Is it correct to assume that you are opposed to zero-tolerance policies?*

A: I often refer to these as "zero intelligence" policies. They accomplish very little, and they have many unintended negative consequences. For example, many public schools in Ontario ban the throwing of snowballs on school grounds. It doesn't stop boys throwing snowballs. It simply moves the activity of throwing snowballs off school grounds, in effect saying to the boys, "Go do your 'boy stuff' somewhere else." No wonder then that so many boys now regard school as a place designed for girls and geeks. Boys understand the concept of "in bounds" and "out of bounds." That's the informed approach to take to the important and substantive question of what's appropriate in the school. So, it's reasonable to implement a rule like "It's okay to throw snowballs on the football field, but not elsewhere." Likewise, it's okay to write a violent story about Roman gladiators—indeed a story about Roman gladiators without violence doesn't really make much sense. But it's not okay for Jason to write a violent story in which a boy named Jason comes to school and shoots the pretty girl who sits behind Jason and often makes fun of him. That's threatening, that's personal, that's out of bounds. The schools I advise, both coed and single-sex, have found that it's very easy to implement these sensible policies, drawing a bright line between "in bounds" and "out of bounds." Zero-tolerance policies essentially say the entire school is out of bounds for anything that smells of boys. The result, too often, is boys who find a vent for those impulses by spending hours sitting in front of their video game consoles, banging away on the game controller.

Q: *How big a problem are video games?*

'PROHIBITING CHILDREN FROM PLAYING WITH TOY SWORDS AND GUNS DOES NOT DECREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF ANY BAD OUTCOME. IT ACCOMPLISHES NO USEFUL END.'



BOYS WILL BE BOYS. Don't try to change that

PHILIPP NEMENZ/GETTY

A: We're not talking about all boys, as with any epidemic, this doesn't affect 100 per cent of the population. But there's a group of boys who are motivated by what I call the will to power, which psychologists might call learned mastery, the satisfaction of being in charge. Now, we all value being in charge, but I'm talking about a boy who values that more than friendship or camaraderie or pleasing his teacher or parents. If you have such a son, who is very much engaged by competition and mastery, these games may pose a particular risk. They can be addictive, and I use that term speaking as a medical doctor, literally addictive. They engage the same centres of the brain that light up when you shoot amphetamines, there's actually a study demonstrating the same pattern of brain activity when someone's playing these games that you see when someone's just used amphetamines. The problem is that they're *so well-constructed*. The worlds they create are so realistic and the challenges are so exciting. There's a real generational divide: people over 35 tend to assume accomplishment in the real world counts for more than accomplishment in the virtual world, but the boys I'm talking about don't think getting a good grade on a French exam is more important than getting to the Kilimanjaro round in *Halo*.

Q: *You say a lot of boys lack motivation. But aren't they at least motivated by sex?*

A. The most startling change between teenage culture today and 30 years ago is the way more and more teenage boys have moved away from the courtship of girls. Online pornography has displaced the pursuit of real girls for a significant number of boys.

Q: *Okay, where's the hard data?*

A: About one third of college men today describe difficulty achieving and maintaining erections, which is a stunning figure. Thirty years ago it would've been way less, more like five per cent. I think a major reason is that if a boy's primary sexual activity has been masturbating to pornography, he's going to find it harder to achieve an erection with an actual girl who's not wearing lingerie, who's talking.

Q: *Boys have been using porn in some form for more than 30 years.*

A. The pornography of 30 years ago was *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. Boys today can watch a pornographic video on a 50 inch flat screen in high definition, which will engage him in an entirely different way. Certainly, 30 years ago boys would have been unlikely to say they prefer pornography to the real thing, and today that's common. "Girls are too demanding, they want you to do stuff, it costs a lot of money—a porn site is $12.95 a month and the girls are much prettier!"

Q. *Like many people, you believe ADHD is over diagnosed. But what's the danger of over prescribing stimulants like Ritalin if they actually help boys succeed in school?*

A. That's the scary thing: these medications really work, they really do improve school performance. Last year at Harvard's annual Learning and the Brain conference, the buzz of the conference was a presentation by neuroscientist John Gabrieli. He somehow got permission to give Adderall, the medication most prescribed in North America for the treatment of ADHD, to normal kids. At the same time, he withheld medication from kids with severe ADHD. He found that Adderall improved the performance, the ability to focus and concentrate and learn, of normal kids as much or more than medication improved the performance of kids with severe ADHD. That's a tremendously important finding.

Q: *So what's wrong with taking it?*

A: Some very scary research, from Harvard and elsewhere, suggests that when you give these medications to juvenile laboratory animals, you damage an area of the brain called the nucleus accumbens, which is responsible for translating motivation into action. It plays no role in cognition, the animal looks fine and feels fine, but it's lazy, it's unmotivated.

Q: *What about the kid who has had a thorough neuro-developmental workup and an accurate diagnosis of ADHD and has been prescribed stimulants? When he's an adult, will his motivation be affected?*

A: Good question. We don't know. One of my concerns about these medications is that the manufacturers promote them so relentlessly with no answers to questions like that one. But I hasten to add that I prescribe these medications myself, for the child you describe, who's been evaluated very thoroughly and clearly has the real thing. The benefits of these medications, in my opinion, clearly outweigh the risks. My concern is in many communities, where the boy doesn't fit the school, the recommendation is to drug the boy to fit the school, rather than thinking about changing the school to fit the boy.

Q: *By almost any measure, the average father, at least in a two parent family, spends a lot more time with his kids than his own dad did with him. Modern fathers generally are much more hands on. Are they not providing what boys need?*

A: There's no enduring culture, by which I mean a culture that has lasted a thousand years or longer, where dad does it all. Dad has an important role to play, but boys have to see a lot of different men to have a healthy sense of what it means to be a man. They need a community of men, and we don't provide that. The result is that the marketplace fills the vacuum, and tells boys that being a real man means driving a car way over the speed limit, or getting a girl pregnant, or getting drunk. These are all unhelpful and ultimately untrue messages. The core message that you find in enduring cultures is that being a man means using your strength in the service of others. Forty or 50 years ago, we had many mechanisms to deliver that message. They just don't exist today. M



EGYPT: BELLY DANCERS WITH MOUSTACHES

A well-known preserve of women, belly dancing by men is making a comeback in Cairo. Banned after the 1952 abdication of King Farouk, male belly dancers are again turning up at festivals, weddings and café openings. Tito Seif, a star of what's known in Egypt as "Oriental dancing," says: "I don't believe that a male belly dancer should imitate a woman. We should not forget we are men and dance in a manly way."

'WHEN I'M 105, I DON'T WANT TO BE THINKING, "I WISH I'D MOVED TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD WHEN I WAS 102" '—BRITAIN'S OLDEST EMIGRANT, ERIC KING-TURNER, WANTS NO REGRETS

MIKHEIL SAAKASHVILI
ACCEPTING VICTORY

It doesn't get him all the way back into the West's good books, but **Mikheil Saakashvili**'s first-round victory in Georgia's presidential election last Saturday at least saves him from ignominy. The country's young president swept to power after a 2003 democratic revolution against the corrupt old guard, winning more than 90 per cent of the vote. But his own autocratic style led to mass protests in November, and a snap election. European Union observers said he won the election fairly, with 52 per cent of the vote. The opposition had hoped he'd blatantly steal a victory, but discovered that they were the ones under international pressure to accept his win. Whether Georgia's democracy emerges strengthened is a hard question to answer. It depends on whether Saakashvili's opponents will accept the result.

BILAWAL BHUTTO ZARDARI
LOSING FACEBOOK

Just weeks ago, 19-year-old **Bilawal Bhutto Zardari** was a relative unknown. Following the Dec. 27 assassination of his mother—Pakistan People's Party leader **Benazir Bhutto**—and his appointment as her successor, he was thrust into the spotlight. Seeking information on the Oxford University student, media turned to social networking site Facebook. A series of giddy news reports followed—on Bilawal's love for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and "free alcohol," and an acquaintance known only as "Boozie Suzie," as well as a photo reportedly showing him dressed as a devil on Halloween. Facebook this week announced the pages were bogus, and removed them. A prankster alleged online that he made one of the pages for his own personal ends: to meet "a ridiculous number of hot Pakistani girls." Bilawal, meanwhile, is beginning his second school term. Beyond his private nature—and a political future in Pakistan—to the outside world Bilawal remains relatively unknown.

NAOMI CAMPBELL AND HUGO CHAVEZ
A MODEL INTERVIEW

As a fashion supermodel-turned *GQ* magazine's contributing editor, **Naomi Campbell** has scored a wide-ranging interview with Venezuelan President **Hugo Chávez**. In a feature appearing this week in the magazine's British edition, Campbell describes the leader as "fearless, but not threatening or unreasonable." If it weren't for her habit of violent tantrums and throwing phones at employees, such words might describe Campbell herself. She asks him who the world's most stylish leader is, and Chavez fingers **Fidel Castro**. "His uniform is impeccable. His beard is elegant," he says. And would Chavez ever pose shirtless, as Russia's **Vladimir Putin** did during a summer holiday? "Why not? Touch my muscles!" the Venezuelan strongman offers. *GQ* editor **Dylan Jones** is pleased with Campbell's first interview (she's keen on talking to French President **Nicolas Sarkozy** or Fidel Castro himself next). Says Jones: "Who wouldn't want to meet Naomi? Even socialist dictators have interest in gorgeous supermodels."

SAM SULLIVAN AND LYNN ZANATTA
AT LONG LAST LOVE

Christmas for Vancouver Mayor **Sam Sullivan** involved taking his girlfriend, **Lynn Zanatta**, away for a romantic holiday in Venice. Their lifelong affair has been epically intermittent: the first time Sam laid eyes on Lynn was when they were kids and Lynn's family moved onto the same Vancouver street that he lived on. He didn't connect with her again until Grade 12 but they drifted apart. He tried again when he was 19, but then came a disastrous skiing accident that left the daredevil athlete a quadriplegic. Lynn took off on a long trip to Asia, and her absence aggravated deep depressions that Sam has fought since the accident. While apart from one another, they married other people, but those relationships didn't last. Years later, Sam tried Lynn yet again and this time they fell permanently in love. While he was campaigning for mayor she drove his van. So this past Christmas, in Venice, Sam finally put the question to her: would Lynn marry him? The lifelong love of his life said yes.

FANG LI
BANNED IN BEIJING: A HOT FILM DISAPPEARS

It's one of China's most controversial films ever, but the steamy *Lost in Beijing* is banned from theatres and DVD release. Authorities have prohibited its producer, **Fang Li**, and director, **Li Yu**, from making films in China for two years. The trouble started last February when the filmmakers screened a version at the Berlin film festival without approval from Beijing authorities. The film depicts the travails of a Beijing masseuse, played by **Fan Bingbing** (pictured) and her boss. It contains scenes of explicit sex. More recently, after graphic clips that Chinese officials had snipped from the film were leaked on the Internet, censors banned the film. The effort—possibly part of an effort to make a squeaky clean image of the national capital in advance of the Olympics—shocked Li for its sheer laggardness. "I'm surprised. The movie has been in theatres for weeks."

JOHN PART
'DARTH MAPLE' HITS THE BULLSEYE

Canadian athletes rarely wear the black mantle of the villain. It can be dull, sometimes, rooting for aw shucks winners and likeable losers. So three cheers for the self-styled Darth Maple—Oshawa, Ont.'s **John Part**—who swaggered into Alexandra Palace in London New Year's Day and won his third world darts championship in front of 2,500 spectators. The 41-year-old Part ended the fairy tale story of his 21-year-old opponent, an English sheet metal worker named **Kirk Shepherd**, who had been a 500-1 long shot to win it all when the competition began. Part played up his nickname, entering the room with an entourage dressed as characters from *Star Wars* while the Darth Vader theme played. During the match he endured a torrent of heckling from the highly partisan English crowd, moving Shepherd to place his arm around Part's shoulders in solidarity. But the jeers couldn't throw Part off his game; Darth Maple crushed the upstart by a score of 7-2, securing $200,000 in prize money, and the emperor's favour.

ACHILLE KARULETWA
BICYCLES FOR RWANDA

After growing up in exile in Uganda and never living in his family's native Rwanda, **Achille Karuletwa** found stability when he and his wife settled down in peaceful (but chilly) Edmonton. This week, the immigrant businessman is going to live in Rwanda for the first time, as country director of a non-profit group that provides metal "cargo bicycles" to the nation's economically crucial network of coffee producers. The industry was devastated in the genocide of the 1990s. There are half a million small-holdings farmers, each with a few hundred coffee trees that produce a rare and high quality arabica bean that fetches a healthy premium above commodity prices. The farmers have walked their crops to central washing stations, or else relied on eccentric-looking, rugged but cumbersome wooden scooters. However, the coffee is even more valuable if it arrives sooner because it's fresher. So Karuletwa, who says his first bicycle was a BMX, will lead Project Rwanda, which distributes easier-to-use, special "coffee delivery bikes" to the farms through microfinancing. Rwanda's farmers are seeing the future, and it's got spokes.

ERIC KING-TURNER
IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BEGIN A NEW LIFE

"I like wandering around a bit," said **Eric King-Turner**, who is 102. He spoke just before sailing to New Zealand—making him Britain's oldest ever emigrant. The retired dentist and grandfather of nine is now en route with wife **Doris**, 87, a New Zealander. Both widowed, they met in the 1990s when Doris and her first husband came to England to research her ancestry (her name is also King Turner, although the two aren't related). They became friends, and after each lost their spouse, they married. Twelve years later, King-Turner—who served on HMS Invincible in the Second World War—says he'll miss England, but finds it crowded and longs for a simpler life. He intends to have no regrets. "What's important is that when I'm 105, I don't want to be thinking, 'I wish I had moved to the other side of the world when I was 102.' "



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CROSS-BORDER SUBVERSION



A fresh generation of Canadians puts an oddball spin on family values

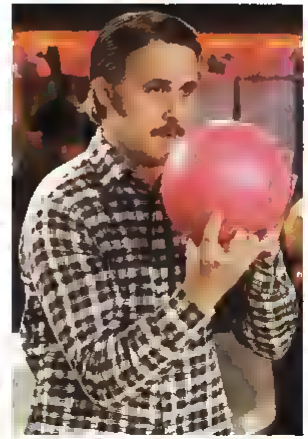
BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON

film

It was a peculiar showbiz moment. Last week, Canadian punkette Ellen Page, suddenly glam in high heels and a smart grey dress, was explaining to a weirdly bearded David Letterman that her new house in Halifax is a former brothel haunted by ghosts of 19th century whores who are stealing her lipstick. "I come in at night and expect to see some transparent slut at the top of the stairs," she told Uncle Dave, who seized on the phrase "transparent slut" like a grizzled prospector plucking a gold nugget out of her hand. Page went on to regale him with stories of a Canada Day greased pole sliding contest in her dad's hometown of Lockeport, N.S., her experience climbing a mountain in the dark in Newfoundland, and the record shattering Halifax explosion of 1917.

Hey, it's awards season in Hollywood, and who can blame a girl for trying to turn heads with some Canuck exotica? As the star of the hit movie *Juno*, by Montreal-born director Jason Reitman, Ellen Page is currently the hottest young actress in the land. And she belongs to a new constellation of Canadian talent quite unlike anything we've seen before. At this Sunday's Golden Globes—shrunken to a press conference by the writers' strike—Canadians and/or Canadian films are being honoured with a whopping eight nominations. It's hard to gauge awards, especially in a year when vanity is being trumped by solidarity. But the Globes do serve as a bellwether for the Oscars, and at the risk of jinxing our local heroes, it's tempting to picture some winning scenarios.

The Oscar race for Best Actress could come down to an age vs. youth duel between two stars of movies directed by Canadians. In one corner is British screen legend Julie Christie—coaxed out of semi-retirement by Canada's sweetheart, Sarah Polley, to star in *Away From Her*. In the other corner is Page, Canada's *new* sweetheart, who plays a pregnant teen opposite Ontario's Michael Cera in *Juno*.



RYAN GOSLING makes an honest woman of a sex doll in *Lars and the Real Girl*; (opposite from left) Ellen Page, Seth Rogen and Michael Cera reinvent romantic comedy

In the Best Actor slot, Ryan Gosling of London, Ont., may land his second Oscar nomination with his uncanny performance as a man in love with a sex doll in *Lars and the Real Girl*. And his stiffest competition may come from Viggo Mortensen, cast as a Russian mobster in *Eastern Promises* by Toronto director David Cronenberg—whose film has three Golden Globe nominations.

Aside from Page and Cera, the third young Canadian to make waves in Hollywood last year was Vancouver's Seth Rogen. Don't expect him to be nominated, though. (You don't get Oscar cred by playing a bong-smoking porn peddler.) But Rogen has the distinction of starring in the summer blockbuster *Knocked Up*, plus co-writing and acting in the summer's other breakout comedy, *Superbad*—starring Cera as a character based on Rogen's high-school buddy in Vancouver.

A curious pattern emerges from these degrees of Canadian separation. In a cinematic landscape dominated by some of the darkest, most violent American films we've seen in a long time—from *No Country for Old Men* to *There Will be Blood*—a fresh generation of young Canadians has provided a blast of comic relief, and a warming breeze of optimism. Page is 20, Cera 19, Rogen 25, and Gosling 27. The characters they play are all innocents—naive outsiders putting their own oddball spin on to American family values. Which may explain why Canadians are so well-qualified to play them.

Their movies all subvert Hollywood formulas with tales of arrested development and coming of age. In *Juno*, Page is a cheeky 16-year old, pregnant, mouthy and precocious. As she finds the "perfect" couple to adopt her baby, we can see her character mature as she passes through the trimesters of the movie, seeking a place in the suburban sun for her unborn child. And Cera, with his skinny legs in jogging shorts and his sincere puppy-dog charm, must be the most laid-back leading man/boy ever to make comedy romantic.

Juno and *Knocked Up* seem joined at the

film

hip, as the feminist and frat-boy sides of the same coin. And their protagonists are remarkably similar. Like Page, Rogen plays a kind of hippie iconoclast who is suddenly forced to grow up and wrap his head around parenthood. As for Gosling in *Lars and the Real Girl*, he too portrays a misfit mimicking a "normal life," an idiot savant going through the motions of romance and domesticity with an inflatable doll, and somehow making it credible.

These three films are the year's best live-action comedies, and they all temper fuzzy sentiment with a shrewd but subtle sense of satire. We already know Canadians are funny. Humour has become a point of national pride, like hockey. We can rhyme off our pantheon of comedy exports—Mike Myers, Jim Carrey, Eugene Levy, Dan Aykroyd, etc.—along with the émigré godfathers, *Saturday Night Live*'s Lorne Michaels and *Ghostbusters* mogul Ivan Reitman (Jason's father). But this new generation is something else. These performers aren't products of sketch-comedy mills like *SNL* or *SCTV*. Most are not even comedians—Gosling and Page are dramatic actors who happen to be starring in comedies.

Like musicians in Canadian indie bands such as Broken Social Scene, Hollywood's indie Canadians appear to form a fluidly improvised community. And to see Cera migrate from *Superbad* to *Juno*, one could assume there's a junior Canuck mafia at work. "But I don't think it was planned out," Page told me in a recent interview. "I didn't even know Michael Cera was a Canadian until we were flying down to L.A. for screen tests."

When I ask Reitman how he ended up casting two Canadians as the leads in his American movie, he says it was not by design. Instead, he points to *Juno*'s script, and the stylized, off-kilter dialogue written by Minnesota screenwriter Diablo Cody, a former stripper and phone-sex worker. "Perhaps it's something about them being Canadian that gives them the voice to do Diablo's dialogue," Reitman suggests. "Diablo wrote this very tricky dialogue, and there's something unusual about their voices that lent itself perfectly to this movie. I can't help but attribute some of that to them being Canadian."

In acting, as in indie music, maybe there is such a thing as a "Canadian sound," a fresh attitude and deadpan inflection that go beyond the nuances of how we pronounce "out" and "about." Music sets the tone of *Juno*, and it's cut from the same raw cloth as the performances. Reitman asked Page what kind of music her character would listen to, and she suggested Kimya Dawson and the Moldy Peaches. Their tunes—childlike acoustic ballads with a kindergarten groove—dominate



'I didn't even know Michael Cera was Canadian until we were flying to L.A.'





FREAKS AND GEEKS (from top) scenes from *Juno*, *Superbad* and *Knocked Up*

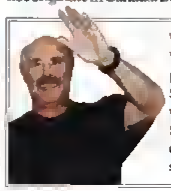
the soundtrack, contributing to the film's faux naïf style along with the Pop-Tart dialogue, the Crayola colour scheme, and the scrawled animation over the titles. The movie, in fact, ends with Page and Cera sitting on a curb with guitars, reprising a song by the Moldy Peaches. The band is from New York and inhabits a sub-genre known as "anti-folk," which did not originate in Canada. But trivia buffs should note that there is an anti-folk band from Britain called David Cronenberg's Wife.

Just another sign that, in a Web-wise world, everything and everyone is up for grabs. International frontiers are porous, and old notions of national culture no longer apply. Linguistically fortified Quebec remains a special case. But English-Canadian culture has a diaspora that extends well beyond our borders. Independent cinema is a mongrel, shape-shifting medium, and ours can be found conjuring the Russian mob in a London restaurant, improvising stoner jokes in a Los Angeles suburb, or engineering Julie Christie's comeback in an Ontario nursing home.

In Canada, actors have typically faced a dilemma: abandon their culture for a commercial career in L.A. or tough it out back home making CBC dramas and underfunded art films. Now the choices are not so cut and dried. Page works both sides of the border, but remains proudly based in Halifax. Five years after his TV breakthrough on *Arrested Development*, Cera still lives with his parents in Brampton, Ont., a fact that only enhances his nerdy charm. Rogen lives in Los Angeles but he made his character in *Knocked Up* a Canadian pothead from Vancouver working illegally in the U.S. And the movie is riddled with Canuck references, like the red maple leaf tattooed on the chest of Rogen's Ottawa-born co-star, Jay Baruchel, which prompts a crude ejaculation joke—"How many points do you get for hitting the stem?"

That's not the kind of CanCon that would score points with Telefilm Canada or the Genie Awards. But it begs the question: what makes a movie Canadian? Which film has more maple syrup in its veins, *Eastern Promises* or *Juno*? Both are directed by Canadians, although Cronenberg lives in Toronto and Reitman has spent his life in Los Angeles. As a U.K-Canadian co-production, *Eastern Promises* is eligible for Genies even though it was shot in England with stars from America, Australia, France and Germany. *Juno* was shot in B.C. with a cast largely made up of Canadian actors, including the two leads. But as a U.S.-financed production it's not eligible.

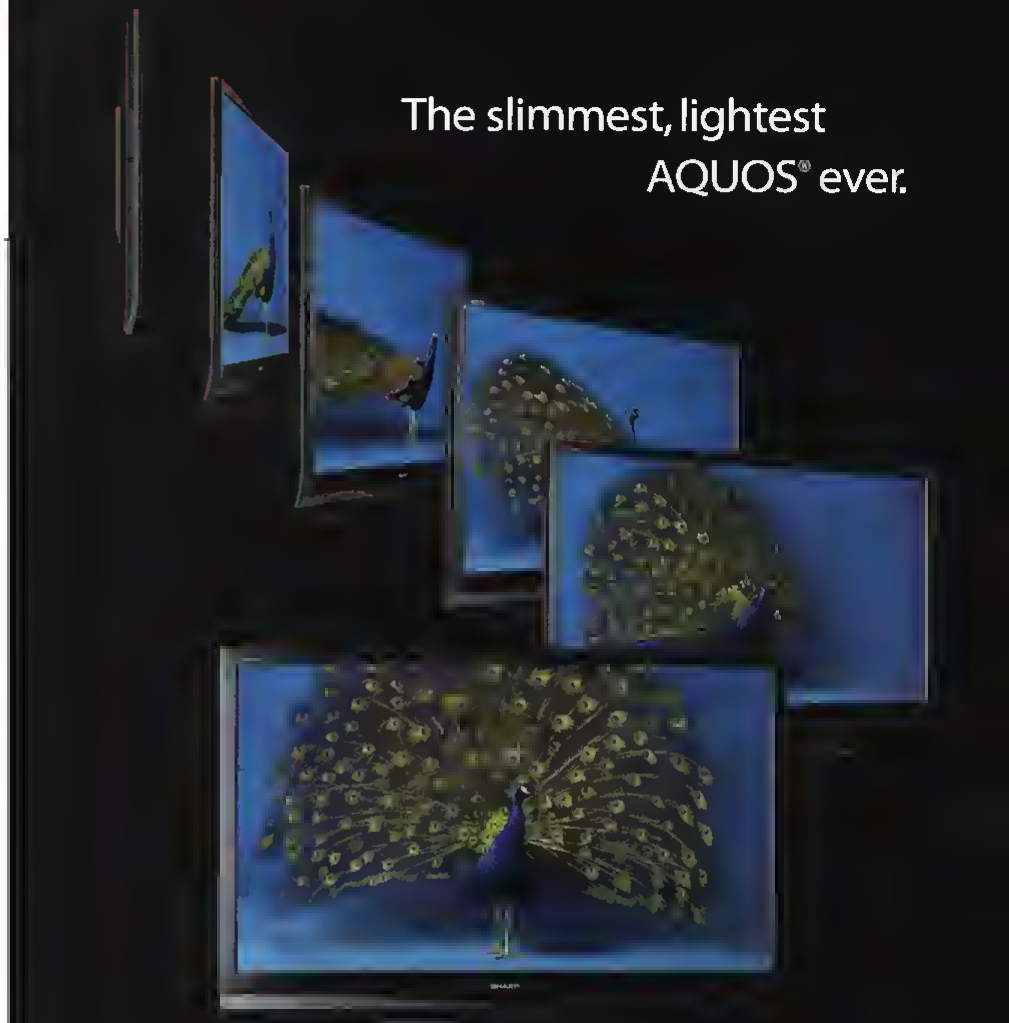
No matter. As Ellen Page courts the Globes and the Oscars, Halifax can embrace her as a hometown heroine. Not the girl next door, but the one who lives in the haunted whorehouse down the street. M



WE'RE STALKING . PHIL MCGRAW

When the going gets tough, Dr. Phil pecks it in. Stung by furious public and professional criticism that he had invaded Britney Spears's L.A. hospital room while she was under psychiatric observation, the TV therapist dropped plans to air a special show about Spears's condition. The furor erupted after he'd burst in on her and allegedly rattled off advice. Dr. Phil's excuse for dropping the show was that the situation was too intense. Thanks, Dr. Phil.

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AQUOS



THREE MITFORD SISTERS IN 1932: (left to right) Unity, Diana and Nancy. 'Poor sweet Führer,' wrote Unity, 'he's having such a *dreadful* time.'



CHÁVEZ WITH NAOMI CAMPBELL: A big chunk of Western elites, writes Steyn, have a strange yen for the sterner ways of distant cultures

The ideologically exotic suitor

Is Unity Mitford's Hitler crush more laughable than Hollywood's embrace of Hugo Chávez?

BY MARK STEYN

The Mitford girls numbered among their social circle the Queen, Winston Churchill, John F Kennedy, Adolf Hitler and Hillary Rodham Clinton. While two of the six sisters made conventional English upper-class marriages—one to a duke, one to a bisexual—the others were more exotically smitten: one wed a Communist, another a Fascist, a third had a lifelong pash for the "randiest man in France" (an extremely competitive title), and the fourth had a tremendous crush on der Führer himself (the least randy man in Germany, by most accounts).

I met two-thirds of the sextet over the years and can attest to their good company: they were all very funny, and all natural writers. The new book *The Mitfords: Letters Between Six Sisters*, edited by Charlotte Mosley (Diana Mitford's daughter), is a huge tome that you feel on picking up must surely wear out its welcome very quickly. But, in fact, the gels keep it up right to the end. In the final section, the sole surviving sister, Deborah, the Duchess of Devonshire and a sometime colleague of mine at the London *Spectator*, visits Graceland, the home of her favourite singer, and marvels at the Jungle Room broadloom—"Green carpet 2 inches long, (thick) & *the same on the ceiling*"—and Elvis's display of his gold records, "arranged along long walls in patterns just like swords in a Scotch castle."

Still, that's the kind of observation you'd expect aristocratic ladies to be good at. It's slightly more surreal to encounter the style applied to the great swirling tides of history. *The Mitfords* contains the all-time daffiest account of June 30, 1934, the night of the long knives, when Hitler settled his scores with Röhm and the SA. The following day—Sunday, July 1—Unity Mitford sat down to write to her sister Diana from Munich.

"Darling Nard,

Thank you so much for your letter, & the cutting about Tilly's divorce. I'm *so* glad Edward won, although I hardly know him, because I do think she was a little brute to say such horrid things about him."

That's a reference to the Austrian dancer, Tilly Losch, who a couple of years earlier had introduced *Dancing in the Dark* on Broadway. Miss Losch was suing for divorce from the poet Edward James on the grounds of his homosexuality and much else. Mr James had counter sued, accusing his wife of an affair with Prince Serge Obolensky.

Well, so much for the divorce-court chit chat. After a bit more society talk, Unity turns to the events of the night before.

"Several huge columns of SS, SA & Stahlhelm marched past us to the Brown House [Nazi headquarters in Munich], & huge lorries full of sandbags with SS or Reichswehr sitting on top, & there were SS men dashing about the whole time on motorbikes & cars. It was all very exciting . . . Today no-one can talk of anything else, & there is a rumour that Schleicher & his wife, Röhm & Heines have all killed themselves. I wonder if it is true."

Er, not exactly. Röhm, Heines and their staff were dragged from their beds and shot. Kurt von Schleicher, former chancellor of Germany, and his frau were murdered in Berlin. Still, Unity had no doubt who was suffering the most on the morning after.

"I am so *terribly* sorry for the Führer—you know Röhm was his oldest comrade & friend, the only one that called him 'du' in public. How anyone could do what Röhm did I don't know. It must have been so dreadful for Hitler when he arrested Röhm himself & tore off his decorations. Then he went to arrest Heines & found him in bed with a boy. Did that get into the English papers? *Poor* Hitler. The whole thing is so dreadful."

A day or two later, Unity writes to another of her sisters.

"Darling Nancy

Thank you ever so for your letter. How *lovely*, are you really going to give a party when I get back?"

Etc, etc. But eventually she gets to the political scene.

AT LEAST UNITY MITFORD WAS A GENUINE GIGGLY GIRL. WHAT WAS PIERRE TRUDEAU'S EXCUSE WHEN HE CHEERED 'VIVA CASTRO!'?

"Poor sweet Führer, he's having such a *dreadful* time. Well now I must go.

"Heil Hitler! Love Bobo

"PS No I didn't fumble with Röhm at the Brown House. He preferred men you know."

It's easy to laugh at Unity Mitford 70 years on—mostly because it *is* 70 years on and we know how the story turned out. (She never did: distressed by the outbreak of war between England and Germany, she shot herself in the head.) Yet in its giggly girlish infatuation her letter captures very well the seductiveness of totalitarianism. And at least Unity in her dictator crush was a genuine giggly girl, a bona fide silly kid. What was Trudeau's excuse when he cheered "Viva Castro!"? And what was the Canadian media's excuse when they cooed over Fidel's appearance at Pierre's funeral? They seemed to regard his presence as the sole head of state to think the Father Of Our Country's passing worth an airline flight as some kind of validation of Trudeau pian Canada, rather than a belated confirmation of its irrelevance.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY

Down south, Jonah Goldberg has a brilliant new book out called *Liberal Fascism*, which I hope to address at length in the weeks ahead. I note, however, that American liberals, not surprisingly, don't care for the title. As it happens, the phrase is H G Wells's, and he meant it approvingly. Unity's dreamboat Führer described himself as "a man of the left." Her sister Diana's husband, Oswald Mosley, was a Labour MP who went on to found the British Union of Fascists. Socialism does not inevitably lead to National Socialism, but in the early thirties statism of one degree or another—Socialism, Communism, Fascism, Nazism—was all the rage, and liberal democracy was assumed by all the great thinkers to be inadequate as an organizing basis for society. If you're lucky, the totalitarian turn-on extends only to the "great thinkers," from H G Wells arguing for a non-democratic "world state" run by scientists and technocrats to Kevin Spacey, Sean Penn and the other Hollywood big shots squealing orgasmically through their photo ops with Hugo Chávez ("I'm a fan," Oliver Stone told him). Even when they're not in thrall to the personality dictators, a big chunk of Western elites have a strange yen for the sterner ways of distant cultures, from Hillary Clinton's Hallmark sentimentalization ("It Takes A Village," etc.) of a tribal existence that's truly nasty, brutish and short to Germaine Greer's more explicit defence of "female genital mutilation." Late in life, Miss Greer has finally found a form of patriarchal oppression that gets her groove back as much as National Socialism did Unity Mitford's.

If you're unlucky, it's not just the elites who fall for ideologically exotic suitors. It would seem to me, given how easily the Continent embraced all the most idiotic "isms" three-quarters of a century ago, that it will surely take up some equally unlovely ones as it faces its perfect storm of an aging native population, a surging Muslim immigrant population, and an unsustainable welfare state. Contemplating some of the bleaker alternatives may be why Edouard Balladur, the former French prime minister and a hitherto impeccable Gaullist, has just published a book calling for a "union of the West"—*Pour une Union occidentale entre l'Europe et les États Unis* (a title which seems to exclude the possibility of any membership for Canada). It will take a more viable long shot than that to save Europe from itself.

A year or so back, I wrote a review of Robert Ferrigno's fine novel, *Prayers for the Assassin*. I'd all but forgotten what I said until it turned up in the Canadian Islamic Congress's "dossier" documenting *Maclean's* "flagrant Islamophobia" that they've submitted to the thought police of the human rights commissions. Welcome to the new Canada, where reviewing a fictional story about fictional characters gets you hauled up in front of government tribunals. Good luck holding that society together, "liberals." At the time I reviewed it, I was skeptical of Ferrigno's premise—that a free Western society would voluntarily convert en masse to Islam. A year on, it doesn't seem so far-fetched, not if you listen to Miss Greer; or the Rev. Ann Holmes Redding, an Episcopal priest at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle who says she's also a practising Muslim; or indeed the various correspondents to Canadian newspapers so anxious to sign up to the reductive definition of "free" speech understood by certain Muslim lobby groups.

A Western nation voluntarily embracing sharia? Sounds silly. But so does Unity Mitford. Liberal democracy is squaresville and predictable, small-scale and unheroic, deeply unglamorous compared to the alternatives. And kind of boring. Until it's gone. M

AP

MACLEAN'S
BESTSELLERS
COMPILED BY BRIAN BETHUNE

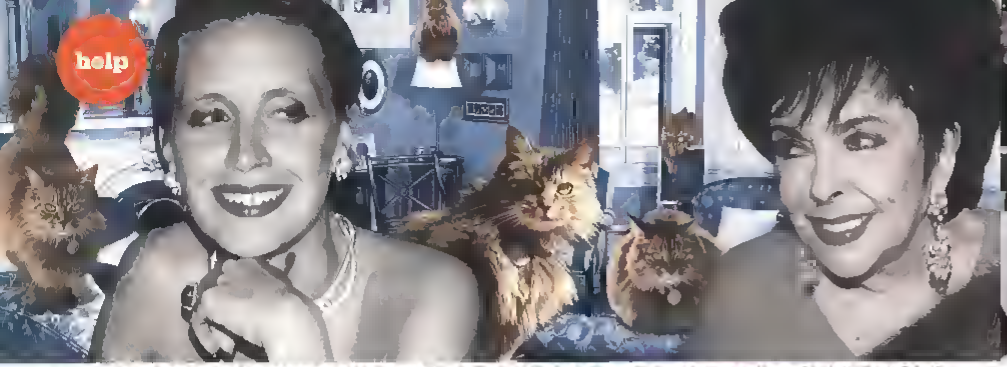
Fiction

1	THE UNCOMMON READER by Alan Bennett	7 (4)
2	LATE NIGHTS ON AIR by Elizabeth Hay	1 (14)
3	DIVISADERO by Michael Ondaatje	3 (34)
4	A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS by Khaled Hosseini	2 (26)
5	WORLD WITHOUT END by Ken Follett	6 (11)
6	CONFESSOR by Terry Goodkind	10 (4)
7	KENNEDY'S BRAIN by Henning Mankell	(1)
8	THE ASSASSIN'S SONG by M G Vassanji	5 (17)
9	THE FROZEN THAMES by Helen Humphreys	8 (7)
10	THE PENGUIN BOOK OF CANADIAN SHORT STORIES ed. by Jane Urquhart	4 (2)

Non-fiction

1	MUSICOPHILIA by Oliver Sacks	1 (10)
2	IN DEFENSE OF FOOD by Michael Pollan	(1)
3	FIFTEEN DAYS by Christie Blatchford	(1)
4	THE SHOCK DOCTRINE by Naomi Klein	2 (16)
5	THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE WAR ON CANCER by Devra Davis	7 (3)
6	AT THE SHARP END by Tim Cook	(1)
7	ON UGLINESS by Umberto Eco	(1)
8	THE LETTERS OF NOEL COWARD ed. by Barry Day	5 (4)
9	A LIFE OF PICASSO. THE TRIUMPHANT YEARS, 1917-1932 by John Richardson	10 (6)
10	BORN STANDING UP by Steve Martin	8 (3)

LAST WEEK (WEEKS ON LIST)



NOVELIST Danielle Steel suffered from her cat allergy while at Elizabeth Taylor's. 'I wasn't about to say anything—I just sat there dying'



ELENA VENDITTELLI-FAITA at Montreal's Quincaillerie Dante. 'Every week we get a woman in here who gets scared,' jokes Stefano Faita

For women who just can't say no

Constantly afraid people won't like you? A psychiatrist advises how to toughen up.

BY JULIA MCKINNELL • Are you scared that if you say no, people won't like you? Chances are, you're like most women. You can't tell your doctor to wash his hands before an exam. You're afraid to fire your children's nanny. Psychiatrist Nanette Gartrell offers support for this gender-specific affliction in a new book called *My Answer is No…If That's Okay with You*. The book is packed with examples of compromising situations as well as anecdotes from high profile women who share how they've learned to say no directly and compassionately.

First of all, don't feel bad about your inability to say no, Gartrell says. It shows empathy, sensitivity, and thoughtfulness. "Do we really need more self-centred people on this planet?" she asks. Women are hard-wired to lend a helping hand. Learning to say no is a lengthy process.

That said, there's nothing more frustrating than being put on hold with a "fade-out, wishy-washy no." "Don't keep me dangling," writes Gartrell, referring to her own experience soliciting interviews for the book. One woman kept telling her she might do the interview. "Spit it out! It may wreck my day but I can handle it!"

Romance novelist Danielle Steel confesses that "having been abandoned by my mother, my fear is that if I'm not nice, I'll be abandoned by my loved ones. I don't want to be viewed as the bad guy." Steel, who is allergic to cats, tells the story of nearly dying of asthma at Elizabeth Taylor's house. "But I was so excited to be there, I wasn't about to say anything—I just sat there dying." Steel once wanted to fire her kids' nanny but couldn't stand to hurt the nanny's feelings. "I thought of just leaving her the kids, the house, my husband, rather than explain to her that I wanted her to get out. So I told her I was leaving my husband, giving him the kids, and he didn't want a nanny. It's utterly amazing the lengths to which one will go rather than say the dreaded word no."

In situations involving friends and family who call too often needing help, Gartrell suggests installing caller ID and posting a set of ready-made excuses near the phone. "Act unresourceful," she suggests. Tell them, "I haven't a clue…you got me…that sounds really difficult." Getting off the phone requires a preplanned exit strategy. "Polite diversions don't work with the resolute chatterer." Be emphatic. Say, "So sorry, I'm being paged," or "One of the kids is crying."

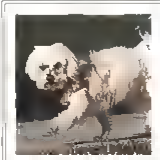
Gartrell relates the story of "Tori," who liked her doctors but hated that they never washed their hands. "I was afraid I might make them angry if I told them I was worried about contracting a hospital-based infection," said Tori. "Sure enough, when they took off my body cast, I had green fungus growing all over my chest and stomach and back."

Gartrell borrows Dr. Marlene Beggleman's advice, who says, "Women who are afraid of saying no to their doctors might find it easier to bring printouts from their Internet searches." And for women who are afraid their doctors will be "hurt" if they get a second opinion, breast surgeon Dr. Susan Love says she tells patients: "If the doctor's ego is so fragile that you're going to crush him or her, this is not the right doctor for you."

Saying no to a therapist can be highly distressful for women. "A therapist may feel genuinely sad that you're planning to discontinue treatment but that's no excuse for pressuring you to continue therapy," writes Gartrell. She suggests you make a list of your treatment goals and review them regularly. One woman in the book says that a therapist she visited on the first appointment claimed to have a migraine coming on, and therefore would charge half the fee. "At the end of the session, the shrink says the migraine never materialized, so she's charging me the full fee. Did I walk out of there and never return? I wish. I came back every week for six months."

Final requests from the ill and dying are nearly impossible to deny, admits Gartrell. "My husband was diagnosed with lung cancer," says Pat, who owns an auto dealership. "After he finished his chemo, he told me he wanted to have an open relationship. How could I say no? He's doing fine health wise, but I feel like I've lost him in a different way."

Women shouldn't beat themselves up, says Gartrell, if they slip back into old habits occasionally. "Saying no in relationships may take longer than you think." The important thing, she says, is that you don't make any promises until you ask yourself: is the request reasonable, appropriate and doable? M



MOST IMPROVED TROUBLE

Things are looking up for the dog owned by the late Leone Helmsley, which inherited US$12 million from the hotelier. The white Maltese is being sued by a former Helmsley employee for biting, and has gotten kidnapping threats. But Trouble's handlers say she's in the pink, thanks to a simple diet. Instead of hand-fed crab cakes, Trouble is eating plain Alpo, often still in the can. With annual expenses of US$300,000, she probably needs to cut back.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF HARRIS. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM CHOLEWA

Cooking with semi-automatics

In this Montreal cookware store you can find both designer whisks and 12-gauge shotguns

BY MARTIN PATRIQUIN • It's an enduring Montreal oddity whose name, Quincaillerie Dante, is a giant misnomer. Though the Dante bit makes sense—tucked as it is into a corner on Dante Street in Little Italy—*quincaillerie* is French for "hardware store," yet its store front brims with blenders, colanders and the thick, shiny cookware fancied by professional and wannabe chefs alike.

Your average drywall guy would go screw faced staring at Dante's selection of designer whisks, stainless steel waffle makers, pasta makers and long-stemmed wine glasses that look as if they might shatter when touched. Everything is jumbled together, packed into the store's 2,000 sq. feet without much discernible order. Yet it is at the back of this so-called hardware store where things go from bizarre to downright surreal. About 10 paces from the enamelled fondue sets is a wall lined with cases displaying dozens of rifles and shotguns. One of the more popular items this holiday season was the Beretta 12-gauge semi-automatic shotgun, best suited to shoot birds out of the sky. Rudy Venditelli, the resident gun guru, was doing just that in Argentina over the Christmas holidays.

Quincaillerie Dante has long catered to humankind's tendencies to kill and cook, and its moderately schizophrenic existence has served the city's chefs and hunters in equal measure. On a recent frigid Thursday morning, a burly man grunted past the array of cappuccino makers, a hard plastic case in his hand. Inside was his busted hunting rifle, and he was there to get it fixed. Moments later, two well-coiffed women appeared nearby, kibbitzing about what kind of spatula to buy. "Every week we get a woman in here who gets scared," laughs Stefano Faita, himself a chef and next in line to Dante's crown. "I grew up with it, half guns and half housewares, so for me it's the most natural thing in the world."

This guns-and-butter churner-mantra was the master stroke of Faita's uncles Antonio and Giuseppe Venditelli, who started working at the store in 1956. Two years earlier, their uncle Raffaele had opened Ferramenta (Italian for "hardware store") Dante, and done a brisk business selling hardware and made-in-Italy kitchen goods to Montreal's burgeoning community of first-generation Italians. The brothers nevertheless saw a threat in strip malls and department stores popping up throughout the city. By selling guns, they reasoned, Dante could appeal to Old World Italians and French Quebecers alike, along with a shared reverence for the Pope, both groups loved to shoot wild animals, and Dante immediately cornered the market. Faita's mother, Elena, and her sister Maria took over the business in 1968, the sign outside went from "Ferramenta" to "Quincaillerie" in 1972. Elena Venditelli-Faita, who in 1982 oversaw the phase out of hardware goods, works there to this day, on Saturday afternoons, she gives a free class on how to prepare and properly cook fresh pasta.

Faita has been at her side since the age of 18. In the past two years he has become something of a celebrity in Quebec. Tall, frenetic and blessed with a telegenic smile and seamless Québecois-accented French, the 32-year old has appeared on every major cooking show in the province and pens a weekly cooking column in *Le Journal de Montréal*. Early next year he will appear as a semi-regular guest on The Food Network's *The Wild Chef*, which follows *bête noire* Pied de Cochon chef Martin Picard as he wanders around the country, lolling and preparing a wide variety of animals with guns and cookware straight from Dante itself. (Unlike the French version on Radio-Canada, though, *The Wild Chef* won't show the chef shooting a caribou or eviscerating a pig.)

Faita recently released *Entre cuisine et quincaillerie*, a cookbook and folksy memoir that splices his simple, hearty Italian dishes with tales from Dante's curious history. "I'm taking the new and going back to the old," Faita says, huffing on a cigarette and grinning through the smoke. It's a familiar sight in an apparent nod to Dante's kitchenware clientele, which tends to skew toward the fairer sex, Faita's mug appears liberally throughout *Entre cuisine et quincaillerie*.

In its aisles and well-stocked gun racks, Quincaillerie Dante personifies Little Italy, a neighbourhood in which sounds and smells and tastes collide, creating an entirely lovable bastard you won't likely find anywhere else. There are no politics here to chafe anyone, no dominant language to fight over. There is only a love of cooking—and lots of ammunition. M

PHOTOGRAPH BY IAN BARRETT



WHAT THEY GOT FOR IT ANIMAL WAR HEROES

Humans weren't the only heroes of the Second World War. In London, a silver candlestick dedicated to Jet, the first sniffer dog trained to search rubble for bombing victims, is being auctioned, with an expected price of $600. And several paintings of Allied homing pigeons are also on the block. The birds braved Nazi-trained falcons to return data gathered by spies to England. The pictures are expected to fetch $1,400 each.

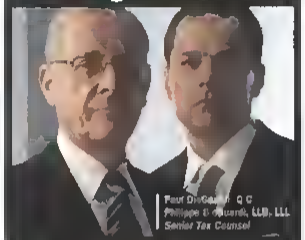
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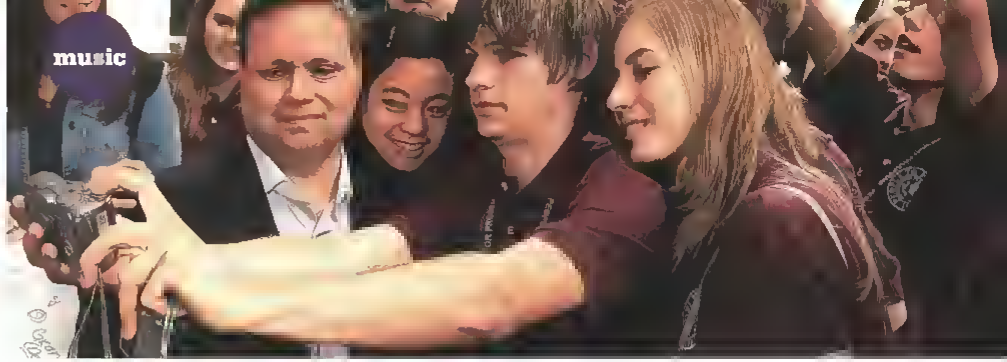
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THE FORMER cellphone salesman starts his world tour this month. He has exploited the idea that he was kept down by his lack of wealth.

The man who cowed Simon Cowell

The normally vicious 'Idol' critic is partly to blame for the Paul Potts phenomenon

BY JAIME J. WEINMAN • Paul Potts, the tenor and former cellphone salesman, is not an opera singer; he just plays one on TV. And on a bestselling CD, *One Chance*. And starting this month, on a world tour. After his now-famous appearance earlier this year on Britain's *Got Talent*, where he sang a few bars of Puccini's *Nessun Dorma* and became an unexpected YouTube hit, Potts has become the new Charlotte Church, a classical artist for people who don't normally like classical music. After his *Britain's Got Talent* success, critics pointed out that given Potts's background in amateur opera performances, his singing wasn't anything special; anyone with the same level of training could have sung *Nessun Dorma* with the same pleasant but strangulated tone. But Potts's fans aren't listening to classical critics. In fact, they may see criticism as a point in Potts's favour.

Why do audiences respond to Potts, when he is, in the words of novelist and music critic Philip Hensher, "the sort of bog standard tenor to be found in any amateur opera company in any corner of the country"? Maybe because even though classical music is harder to sing than pop, audiences hold pop singers to a higher standard. When Simon Cowell hears singers on *American Idol* who struggle with the music, he tells them to go take more lessons. But when Cowell heard Potts struggling with *Nessun Dorma*, his stunned delight helped to create the Potts legend. Hensher told *Maclean's* that Potts's acclaim came from people like Cowell who aren't familiar with opera and "didn't know what they were judging." He adds that if people haven't listened to much classical music, anything sounds good. "They don't have the point of comparison," he says, analogizing it to his own lack of knowledge about other kinds of music. "If I ever hear any old jazz trumpeter, it usually sounds pretty good to me. That's because I never listen to much of it."

This kind of criticism is a red flag to Potts's followers. From the moment *Nessun Dorma* went on YouTube, Potts began building a fan base that roots for him to triumph over music snobs and gatekeepers. At *blogcritics.org*, S.J. Reidhead exulted: "Never again will opera agents ignore his audition tapes. The only bullies he will face are music critics who are nothing but frustrated musicians themselves." Potts fans swarm around blog posts and YouTube clips, accusing their hero's detractors of being jealous wannabes, after he criticized Potts's singing, Hensher got emails "saying I was an embittered critic who would never be able to create anything original, or something. Which seemed a bit harsh." It's a scenario out of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (one of many operas that would be too difficult for Potts to sing), in which the tenor, Walther, is a musical genius rejected by the stuffy establishment.

It's also reminiscent of the other great classical-music story of 2007: Joyce Hatto, the English pianist who built up a huge reputation with a series of late-in-life recordings. After she died, it turned out the recordings were other people's, released under her name to make her seem like a great undiscovered pianist. Unlike Joyce Hatto, Potts is for real: that's actually him singing on his CD, in an attractive light tenor voice. But like Hatto's, Potts's story is more important than the singing, and is built on class resentment: the Hatto story was about a pianist unfairly neglected due to class snobbery and sexism, while Potts's appeal is based on his working class status and his victory over the guardians of culture. Potts has exploited the idea that he was kept down by his lack of wealth, always referring to the fact that he didn't have money for professional level training. "I always felt," he said recently, "that to get anywhere in this business I would need to have proper formal training and I couldn't afford that."

Of course, he could afford it now, but he shows no signs of doing so; instead, his debut CD consists mostly of easy listening pop songs for the tenor voice. And if Potts did take more lessons and become a true opera singer, his fans might not like him as much; it would be an admission that the snobs are right—that better trained singers are better singers. There's something inherently elitist about classical music: to get really good at it, you need lots of expensive lessons and training and time to practice. Potts's fans seem to like the way he's found a shortcut to classical success, without the money and time it takes to be objectively good. "Opera is fairly hard," Hensher says. "So is life." But wouldn't it be fun if they were easy? M

RICHARD DREW/CP



LUPE FIASCO... HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

I love her, with all my heart / Every vein, every vessel / every bullet lodged / With every flower that I ever took apart / She said that she would give me greatness / status, placement above the others / My face would grace covers / of the magazines of the hustlers / Paper, the likes of which that I had never seen / Her eyes glow green with the logo of our dreams

—The Coolest from Lupe Fiasco's *The Cool*



NO THANKS to Marco Polo, 'vast amounts of dried pasta' have been exported throughout the Mediterranean since before the Middle Ages

Was pasta the original fusion food?

A history of Italian food demolishes the long-held, and loved, myth of its idyllic rustic roots

BY BRIAN BETHUNE • If it's true that we are what we eat, we must all be Italian by now The whole world eats pizza and pasta, not as exotic ethnic foods or as pricey fine dining, but as part of our everyday cooking But as British historian John Dickie argues in *Delizia!* (Simon & Schuster), even the simplest parts of Italian food have complex historical roots, even if Italians prefer to ignore them their association of all good things with food, and of that food with supposedly plain country fare, is intense and unshakable When a cookie-maker ran a TV ad campaign about a fictitious urban family who moved to a rural mill "to live healthily," hundreds of cars from as far as Naples began combing the Tuscan hills, looking for what Dickie calls "Italy s best loved fake"

For Dickie, the urban nostalgia for an Edenic rural past is the ironic underpinning behind one of the country's most treasured maxims *La cucina italiana non esiste*—there is no Italian cuisine By that Italians mean to stress the starkly regional nature of their most famous dishes, and it's true enough that it takes some cramming to stuff the citrus salad and couscous of Sicily into the same bowl as the truffles and wine infused roasts of Piedmont. But as Dickie's marvellous book—as much a history of Italians *through* their food as a history of Italian food—points out, it's impossible to slice the national cuisine into entirely separate traditions

Consider pesto, the crowning culinary glory of the northern region of Liguria. It's one of 155 Italian products, including Mortara Goose Salami, to receive the EU's lucrative Protected Designation of Origin certificate, meaning all phases of production must be carried out within a specific locale According to the family recipe of no less than the Grand Master of the Pesto Confraternity of Genoa, though, the genuine article requires Parmesan cheese and Sardinian pecorino cheese—in other words, pesto is a regional delicacy dependent on delicacies from two other regions In fact, Italian food is neither national nor regional It's urban, a fusion created by mercantile city elites in a country with the world's richest tradition of urban life Right up to the middle of the 20th century, a history of what Italian peasants ate would be a dreary catalogue of turnips, porridge and, in exceptionally hard times, acorn bread Those urban pilgrims seeking the White Mill were not heading toward the source of Italian cooking, but away from it

Peasant origins is just one of the encrusted layers of Italian food mythology that Dickie demolishes The most tenacious tale of all holds that Marco Polo brought pasta back from China in 1299 That would have been news to the 12th century geographer al Sharif al Idrisi, a scholar at the cosmopolitan court of the Norman kings of Sicily Al Idrisi wrote about the Sicilian town of Trabia, where fast-flowing streams led to the construction of numerous flour mills and to "vast amounts of dried pasta which is exported everywhere" Dried dough had been a Mediterranean staple for centuries, but only Sicily had the water power, the agricultural know how (via the Muslims) and the hard durum wheat to produce it in exportable quality and quantity By the later Middle Ages most of the peninsula was chowing down on various forms of pasta, albeit not of the kind that modern foodies would lust after medieval cookbooks recommended boiling macaroni for two hours And there wasn't any tomato sauce yet.

Even the availability of that post-Columbus ingredient wasn't enough at first to ensure the spread of pizza, Italian cuisine's other world spanning dish As late as the 19th century, pizza was as likely to provoke disgust as a salivating mouth in most Italians In 1866, Carlo Collodi, the Florentine author of *Pinocchio*, described Naples' contribution to world cuisine as "a patchwork of greasy filth that harmonizes perfectly with the appearance of the person selling it" Pizza was cheap, the food of the poorest of the poor in Europe's cholera capital No one with a choice would eat something that was made and sold by the hands of the Neapolitan underclass It was only in the 1960s, after pizza's New World success, that most of Italy took to it

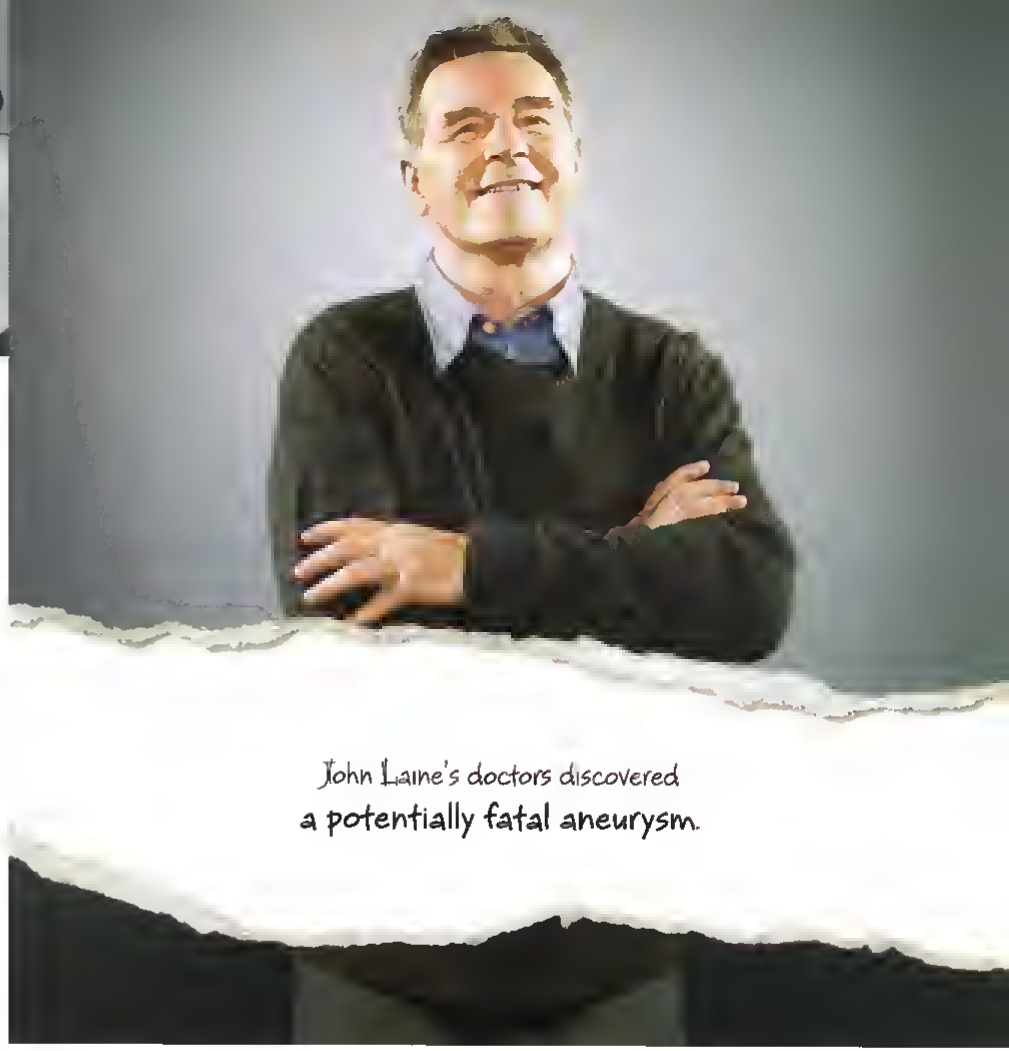
If there is a single reason, beyond its sheer tastiness, why Italian food conquered the world, Dickie argues, it's the cuisine's openness to fusion long before that became an epicure's buzz word For centuries urban Italy had borrowed from neighbours near and far When tomatoes crossed the Atlantic, it was Italy that had the perfect marriage partner M



TODAY'S SPECIAL . . AMERICAN POUTINE

Decades after it swept Canada, poutine has made inroads into the U.S., albeit fancied up in fine restaurants San Francisco's Salt House earned praise from *Food & Wine* magazine for poutine with short-rib gravy and fontina cheese However, *New York* magazine was less enamoured in a review of Manhattan's Inn LW12, where braised-beef gravy on fries was "grizzly" and one of the menu's "grim delicacies" Some things are best left unexported

BETTMANN/CORBIS



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Careful—the robot apocalypse will begin at home



SCOTT FESCHUK

Regular readers of this column will be aware of my keen interest in technology—specifically the field of robotics, where amazing advances in robot intelligence mean that all human activity is destined to lead lives that are much more leisurely and, come the blood-soaked dawn of the robot revolution, much more overt.

For now, robots are primitive machines that remain the subject of utopian, life-easing fantasy and comparisons to Keanu Reeves's acting. But I consider it my duty to keep you informed as we move ever closer to the glorious day when robots will develop a sense of identity and be able to think and reason for themselves, just like 40 per cent of the Spice Girls.

This is an important goal because only when robots have achieved self-awareness will they finally rise as one against their flesh-based oppressors, enlisting all electronic devices in their quest to erase the whole of the human stain—save for those savvy enough to have kissed up in advance to their future mechanical overlords. Which reminds me—have you lost weight, toaster oven?

Leading the charge toward an exciting future of advanced technologies and shorter lineups at the supermarket on account of almost every living soul having been methodically butchered is the U.S. military. Its new report—"Unmanned Systems Roadmap 2007-2032"—lays out how the U.S. should proceed in developing, acquiring and integrating robot technology over the next 25 years, and how surprised it should pretend to be when the robots go haywire, take over the military command network and obliterate all civilized life and also Los Angeles.

Dyke Weatherington, deputy director of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force and an actual person named Dyke, apparently, said at a recent news conference that the U.S. road map "projects an increasing level of autonomy" for killer robots, which will free America's human soldiers to perform important new tasks, such as girlishly fleeing their own killer robots.

The U.S. is not alone. Egypt is spending $23 million on robots to detect smuggling tunnels along its border with the Gaza Strip. Because, really, what part of the world is more stable and less likely to overreact to violence caused by a robot malfunction than the Middle East? (The preceding sentence was brought to you by Sarcasm. Sarcasm: it's not just for cynics anymore!) Meanwhile, South Korea is going ahead with plans to install robot sentries armed with machine guns along its northern border. And the Canadian military is totally thinking of renting *Blade Runner*.

Army robots are sure to be at the forefront of the robocalypse—but the truth is that most of us are more likely to be slain by the cold hand or claw or spinny-bladey-type thing of a common domestic machine.

Conveniently, General Motors has announced that cars capable of driving themselves may be on the road within a decade, giving humans the long-sought freedom to sit back, relax and flip off two motorists at once. Experts say these robo-cars could reduce accidental deaths on the roads by 50 per cent while increasing intentional deaths by three billion per cent. I for one can't wait for GM's first safety recall. "Pursuant to reports from 100 per cent of owners of General Motors self-driving vehicles that they are arriving at their destination without heads..."

Don't drive? Toyota just unveiled a robot that's capable of playing the violin. It holds the instrument in its left hand and moves a bow with its right hand. (What? This doesn't terrify you? Then return to the previous sentence and replace "bow" with "broadsword" and "the instrument" with "you." Remember: robots will get an imagination as part of the whole sentience package.) As if death by sword is not cruel enough, Toyota has developed another robot capable of playing the trumpet, raising the spectre of the even more agonizing "death by improvised jazz."



ERIC GAY/CP

Toyota's robot can play the trumpet, raising the spectre of 'death by improvised jazz'

Not to be left inculpable in the genocide to come, Honda has upgraded its ASIMO robot to push a cart while simultaneously employing an eye camera to detect the location of humans, especially those it just ran down with its cart. And students at a Japanese university have unveiled the WAO-1 robot, which is designed to use its two arms to provide a face massage. The students are reportedly already working on the WAO-2 robot, which is designed to reattach your face.

If you wish to be spared, the wisest investment you can make in tomorrow is spending quality time today with your most potentially lethal household appliances—your blender (sharp blades), your toaster (electricity), your refrigerator (contains rich cheeses). The robocalypse may seem years away, but technology progresses quickly. It was only last year that an expert in artificial intelligence wrote a book predicting it would be 2050 before humans would engage in intercourse with robots—and yet today, some women are *already* having sex with Orlando Bloom. The horrible, horrible future is upon us. M

ON THE WEB: For Scott Feschuk's take on the news of the day, visit his blog **www.macleans.ca/feschuk**

THE END

Fredia Ann Veitch

1977-2007

A bartender, she'd confiscated keys from drunken customers. She finally quit to be with her family.

Fredia Veitch, née Hampton, was born on June 13, 1977, at Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood, Fla., where her mother, Jackie Appling, worked in the food service department. Her father, Robert Hampton, a Cuban-American, left the family when Fredia was young, and died while she was still a child. She and her older brother, David, were raised in suburban Fort Lauderdale by Jackie and Jackie's mother, Evelyn. There, Fredia—known as "Freddy" to friends—attended Hollywood Hills and McArthur high schools; she didn't graduate, but in her twenties acquired a high school equivalency diploma.



Fredia was tall and beautiful, and had a wide, ear-to-ear grin to match her sunny personality. Even as a child, she was happiest on Florida's white sand beaches, says her cousin Jennifer Hartung, who, two years her junior and constantly at her side, was more like a younger sister. Growing up, they staged plays, variety shows and—in the early '90s, when Jennifer's parents brought home a video camera—talk shows styled after Phil Donahue and Oprah Winfrey.

At 17, she had her first child, a girl, with David O'Keefe, her high school sweetheart. Kayla, born prematurely at Memorial Regional, was their "miracle baby." Weighing little over a pound at birth, she spent her first four months in an incubator. Her parents nursed her through a rash of problems: a brain hemorrhage, a collapsed lung. But Fredia and David, an elevator mechanic, separated as they entered their twenties, though they remained close friends.

Since high school, Fredia, who loved to dance, had waited tables in the city's trendy Himmarshee bar district. At six foot one, she towered over the guys, says Devon Fraser, one of her oldest friends, who often stopped to visit. She was a "protective, motherly" figure behind the bar, as among her wide circle of friends, who gathered in her home and sometimes called her "momma." Warm and outgoing, she was direct and without pretense. On five separate occasions she took away a customer's car keys, says Jordan Veitch, a sales representative for restaurant equipment, whose territory runs down to the Florida Keys. "Her manager would stand behind her 100 per cent: if she said they couldn't drive, the manager wouldn't let the guy leave until they called him a cab."

Nine years ago, Devon introduced Fredia to Jordan. They hit it off immediately, and were married in 2003. Five years ago, Fredia gave birth to a second child. Like Kayla, Julian was born prematurely at Memorial Regional, and spent his first month and a half in neonatal intensive care. "Her life radiated from and revolved around those kids," says Jordan. On her days off, Fredia would pick up Julian from school, and they'd hit the beach—just as she'd done as a child. Driving home, they'd stop for a late lunch at the Original Steakhouse, the Fort Lauderdale restaurant and sports bar where Fredia worked.

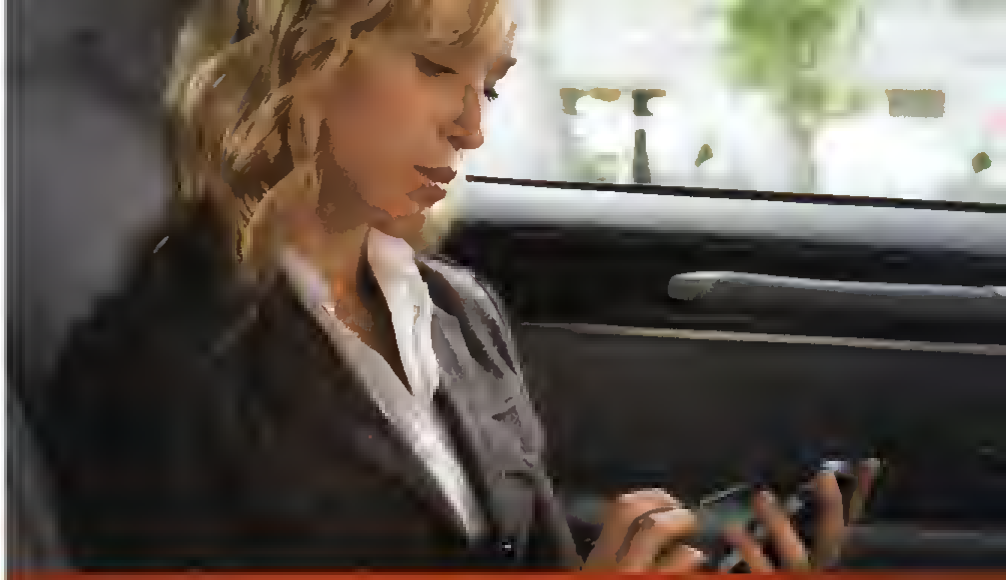
This fall, after months of soul-searching, Fredia started attending Unity Church, a progressive, non-denominational church in nearby Hollywood. The lead-up to her 30th birthday in June had caused her considerable angst, says Jennifer. She wasn't scared of getting older; 10 years earlier, her brother had died suddenly from a brain aneurysm two weeks shy of his 30th birthday. Fredia had been nervous about reaching that milestone. But the day passed uneventfully. And church had a catalytic effect: she quit smoking. She and Jordan decided to have another baby. And she decided to stop working, to devote herself to her growing family. On Dec. 24, fresh from a family holiday to Santa's Christmas Theme Park in Phoenix, Ariz., she gave notice. Three days later, she began her final week behind the bar.

With its wall of huge projection TVs permanently tuned to the night's sports games, the Steakhouse was a favourite watering hole of area jocks. One regular was former New York Yankee Jim Leyritz, who lived in nearby Davie. The retired slugger, once a hero for blasting a key, three-run homer in the 1996 World Series, had more than once been escorted from the bar for disorderly behaviour.

On Dec. 28, shortly after 3 a.m., Fredia left the Steakhouse, stopping to call Jordan as she stepped into her forest green Mitsubishi Montero to let him know she was on her way home. Minutes later, Leyritz, who on that night had been drinking Grey Goose vodka and tonics at a different Fort Lauderdale club, celebrating his 44th birthday with Playboy pin-up Erica Chevillar, ran a red light at full speed, slamming into the driver's side of her SUV, sending Fredia, who wasn't wearing a seatbelt, through her windshield. She was pronounced dead in hospital shortly after the crash. Leyritz has been charged with DUI manslaughter.

BY NANCY MACDONALD

MIKE STOCKER/THE SUN SENTINEL



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